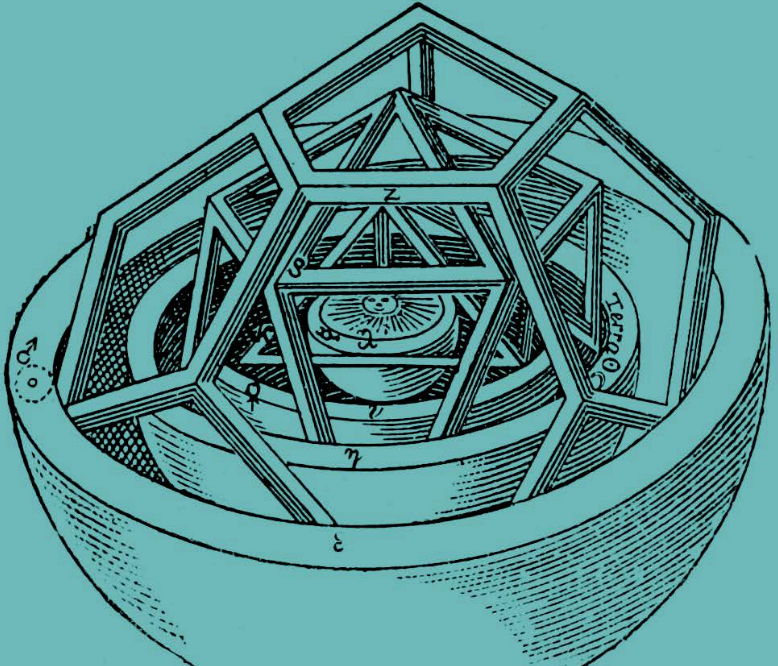
THE REFORM OF EDUCATION



GIOVANNI GENTILE

The Reform of Education

by

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CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION vii

CHAPTER

I EDUCATION AND NATIONALITY 3

II EDUCATION AND PERSONALITY 18

III THE FUNDAMENTAL ANTINOMY OF EDUCATION 40

IV REALISM AND IDEALISM IN THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE 63

V THE SPIRITUALITY OF CULTURE 85

VI THE ATTRIBUTES OF CULTURE 110

VII THE BIAS OF REALISM 139

VIII THE UNITY OF EDUCATION 166

IX CHARACTER AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION . . 192

X THE IDEAL OF EDUCATION 219

XI CONCLUSION 246

NOTE

SHORTLY after Trieste fell into Italian hands, a series of lectures was arranged for the school teachers of the city, in order to welcome them to their new duties as citizens and officials of Italy. The task of opening the series was assigned to Giovanni Gentile, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Rome, who delivered the lectures which constitute the present volume. At my request Signor Gentile has rewritten the first chapter, eliminating some of the more local of the allusions which the nature of the original occasion called forth, and Senatore Croce has very generously contributed his illuminating Introduction. The volume as it stands is more than a treatise on education: it is at one and the same time an introduction to the thought of one of the greatest of living philosophers, and an introduction to the study of all philosophy. If the teachers of Trieste were able to understand and to enjoy a philosophic discussion of their chosen work, why should not the teachers of America?

J. E. S.

INTRODUCTION

THE author of this book has been working in the same field with me for over a quarter of a century, ever since the time when we undertook—he a very young man, and I somewhat his senior—to shake Italy out of the doze of naturalism and positivism back to idealistic philosophy; or, as it would be better to say, to philosophy pure and simple, if indeed philosophy is always idealism.

Together we founded a review, the *Critica*, and kept it going by our contributions; together we edited collections of classical authors; and together we engaged in many lively controversies. And it seems indeed as though we really succeeded in laying hold of and again firmly re-establishing in Italy the tradition of philosophical studies, thus welding a chain which evidently has withstood the strain and destructive fury of the war and its afterclaps.

By this I do not mean to imply that our gradual achievements were the result of a definite preconcerted plan. Our work was the spontaneous consequence of our spontaneous mental development and of the spontaneous agreement of our minds. And therefore this common task, too, gradually becoming differentiated in accordance with the peculiarities of our temperaments, our tendencies, and our attitudes, resulted in a kind of division of labour between us. So that whereas I by preference have devoted my attention to the history of literature, Gentile has dedicated himself more particularly to the history of philosophy and especially of Italian philosophy, not only as a thinker but as a scholar too, and as a philologist. He may be said to have covered the entire field from the Middle Ages to the present time by his works on Scholasticism in Italy, on Bruno, on Telesio, on Renaissance philosophy, on Neapolitan philosophy from Genovesi to Galluppi, on Rosmini, on Gioberti, and on the philosophical writers from 1850 to 1900. And though his comprehensive *History of Italian Philosophy,* published in parts, is far from being finished, the several sections of it have been elaborated and cast in the various monographs which I have just mentioned.

In addition to this, Gentile has been devoting special attention to religious problems. He took a very important part in the inquiry into and criticism of "modernism," the hybrid nature of which he laid bare, exposing both the inner contradictions and the scanty sincerity of the movement. His handling of this question was shown to be effective by the fact, among others, that the authors of the encyclical *Pascendi,* which brought upon Modernism the condemnation of the Church, availed themselves of the sharp edge of

Gentile's logical arguments, prompted by scientific loyalty and dictated by moral righteousness.

Finally, and in a more close connection with the present work, it will be remembered that Gentile has done away with the chaotic pedagogy of the positivistic school, and has also definitely criticised the educational theory of Herbart. As far back as 1900 he published a monograph of capital importance, in which he showed that pedagogy in so far as it is philosophical resolves itself without residuum into the philosophy of the spirit; for the science of the spirit's education can not but be the science of the spirit's development,—of its dialectics, of its necessity.

Indeed, we owe it to Gentile that Italian pedagogy has attained in the present day a simplicity and a depth of concepts unknown elsewhere. In Italy, not educational science alone, but the practice of it and its political aspects have been thoroughly recast and amply developed. And this, too, is due pre-eminently to the work of Gentile. His authority therefore is powerfully felt in schools of all grades, for he has lived intensely the life of the school and loves it dearly.

In addition to these differences arising from our division of labour, others may of course be noticed, and they are to be found in the form that philosophical doctrines have taken on in each of us. Identity is impossible in this field, for philosophy, like art, is closely bound up with the personality of the thinker, with his spiritual interests, and with his experiences of life. There is never true identity except in the so-called "philosophical school," which indicates the death of a philosophy, in the same way that the poetical school proclaims death in poetry.

And so it has come about that our general conception of philosophy as simple philosophy of the spirit—of the subject, and never of nature, or of the object—has developed a peculiar stress in Gentile, for whom philosophy is above all that point in which every abstraction is overcome and submerged in the concreteness of the act of Thought; whereas for me philosophy is essentially methodology of the one real and concrete Thinking—of historical Thinking. So that while he strongly emphasises unity, I no less energetically insist on the distinction and dialectics of the forms of the spirit as a necessary formation of the methodology of historical judgment. But of this enough, especially since the reader can only become interested in these differences after he has acquired a more advanced knowledge of contemporary Italian philosophy.

I am convinced that the translation and popularisation of Gentile's work will contribute to the toilsome formation of that consciousness, of that system of convictions, of that moral and mental faith which is the profound need of our times. For our age, eager and anxious for Faith, is perhaps not yet completely resigned to look for the new creed of humanity there where alone it may be found, where by firm resolve it may be secured—in pure Thought. Clear-sighted observers have perhaps not failed to notice that the World War, in addition to every thing else, has been a strife of religions, a clash of conflicting conceptions of life, a struggle of opposed philosophies. It is surely not the duty of thinkers to settle economic and political contentions by ineffective appeals to the universal brotherhood of man; but it is rather their duty to compose mental differences and antagonisms, and thus form the new faith of humanity—a new Christianity or a new Humanism, as we may wish to call it. Such a faith will certainly not be spared the conflicts from which ancient Christianity itself was not free; but it may reasonably be hoped that it will rescue us from intellectual anarchy, from unbridled individualism, from sensualism, from scepticism, from pessimism, from every aberration which for a century and a half has been harassing the soul of man and the society of mankind under the name of Romanticism.

BENEDETTO CROCE.

ROME, April, 1921.

THE REFORM OF EDUCATION

CHAPTER I

EDUCATION AND NATIONALITY

PARTICIPATION on the part of elementary school teachers in the work and studies of the Universities has always seemed to me to constitute a real need of culture and of primary education. For the elementary school, by the very nature of the professional training of its teachers, is exposed to a grave danger from which it must be rescued if we mean to keep it alive.

The training of the elementary school teacher tends to be dogmatic. True it is that vigilant individuality and passionate love for his exquisitely spiritual calling impel the school teacher to an untiring criticism of his methods, of his actual teaching, and of the life of the school which he directs and promotes. But nevertheless in consequence of those very studies by which he has prepared himself to be an elementary instructor, he is led to look upon that learning which constitutes his mental equipment and the foundation of all his future teaching, as something quite finished, rounded out, enclosed in definite formulas, rules, and laws, all of which have been ascertained once for all and are no longer susceptible of ulterior revision. He looks upon this learning not as a developing organism, but as something definitely moulded and stereotyped. From this the conclusion is drawn that a certain kind of knowledge may serve as a corner stone for the whole school edifice. Since his discipline and his teaching consist mainly of elements which because of their abstractness miss the renovating flow of spiritual life, the teacher slowly but surely ends by shutting himself up in a certain number of ideas, which are final as far as he is concerned. They are never corrected or transformed; in their mechanical fixity they cease to live; and the mind which cherishes and preserves them loses its natural tendency to doubt. Yet what is doubt but dissatisfaction with what is known and with the manner of knowing, and a spur to further inquiry, to better and fuller learning, to self scrutiny, to an examination of one's own sentiments, one's own character, and an inducement to broadmindedness, to a welcoming receptiveness of all the suggestions and all the teachings which life at all moments generously showers on us?

The remedy against this natural tendency of the teacher's mind is to be found in the University, where in theory, and so far as is possible, in practice too, science is presented not as ready-made, definitely turned out in final theories, enclosed in consecrated manuals; but as inquiry, as research, as spiritual activity which does not rest satisfied with its accomplishments, but for ever feels that it does not yet know or does not know enough, aware of the difficulties which threaten every attained position, and ready unrestingly to track them, to reveal them, and meet them squarely. This life, which is perpetual criticism, and unceasing progress in a learning which is never completed, which never aspires to be complete, is the serious and fruitful purpose of the University. Here we must come, to restore freshness to our spiritual activities, which alone give value to knowledge, and wrest it from deadening crystallisation, from mechanical rigidity. For this reason, it seems to me, special provision should be made in the University to satisfy the needs of school teachers. It is not a question of merely furnishing them with additional information which they might just as well get out of books. The University must act on their minds, shake them, start them going, instil in them salutary doubt by criticism, and develop a taste for true knowledge.

The following chapters contain a series of University lectures, in accordance with these criteria, and delivered originally to the elementary teachers of Trieste, now for the first time again an Italian city. They constitute a course which aims not to increase the quantity of culture, but to change its character. It is an attempt to introduce the elementary teacher into those spiritual workshops which are the halls of a University, to induce him to take part in the original investigations which constantly contribute to the formation of our national learning; which forever make and reshape our ideas and our convictions as to what we should want Italian science to be, the Italian concepts of life and literature; as to what constitute the heirloom of our school, that sacred possession bequeathed to us by our forefathers which makes us what we are, which gives us a name and endows us with a personality, by which we are enabled to look forward to a future of Italy which is not solely economic and political, but moral and intellectual as well.

And thus, because of the time, the place, the audience, and the subject, we are from the start brought face to face with a serious question,—a question which has often been debated, and which in the last few years, on account of the exasperation of national sentiment brought about by the World War, has become the object of passionate controversies. For if it has been frequently argued on one side that science is by nature and ought to be national, there has been no lack of warning from the other side as to the dangers of this position. For war, it was said, would, sooner or later, come to an end and be a thing of the past, whereas truth never sets, never becomes a thing of the past; it is error alone that is destined to pass and disappear. We were reminded of the fact that what is scientifically true and artistically beautiful is beautiful and true beyond no less than within the national frontier; and that only on this condition is it worthy of its name.

This question therefore presents itself as a preliminary to our investigation, and it is for us to examine it. We shall do so in as brief a manner as the subject will allow.

We shall first point out the inutility of distinguishing science from culture, education from instruction. Those who insist on these distinctions maintain that though a school is never national in virtue of the content of its scientific teaching, it must nevertheless be national in that it transforms science into culture, makes it over into an instrument with which to shape consciousness and conscience, and uses it as a tool for the making of men and for the training of citizens. Thus we have as an integral part of science a form of action directed on the character and the will of the young generations that are being nurtured and raised in accordance with national traditions and in view of the ends which the state wants to attain. Such distinctions however complicate but do not resolve the controversy. They entangle it with other questions which it were better to leave untouched at this juncture. For it might be said of questions what Manzoni said of books: one at a time is enough—if it isn't too much.

We shall therefore try to simplify matters, and begin by clarifying the two concepts of nationality and of knowledge, in order to define the concept of the "nationality of knowledge." What, then, is the nation? A very intricate question, indeed, over which violent discussions are raging, and all the more passionately because the premises and conclusions of this controversy are never maintained in the peaceful seclusion of abstract speculative theories, but are dragged at every moment in the very midst of the concrete interests of the men themselves who affirm or deny the value of nationalities. So that serious difficulties are encountered every time an attempt is made to determine the specific and concrete content of this concept of the nation, which is ever present, and yet ever elusive. Proteus-like, it appears before us, but as we try to grasp it, it changes semblance and breaks away. It is visible to the immediate intuition of every national consciousness, but it slips from thought as we strive to fix its essence.

Is it common territory that constitutes nationality? or is it common language? or political life led in common? or the accumulation of memories, of traditions, and of customs by which a people looks back to *one* past where it never fails to find itself? Or is it perhaps the relationship which binds together all the individuals of a community into a strong and compact structure, assigning a mission and an apostolate to a people's faith? One or the other of these elements, or all of them together, have in turn been proposed and rejected with equally strong arguments. For in each case it may be true or it may be false that the given element constitutes the essence of a people's nationality, or of any historical association whatsoever. All these elements, whether separately or jointly, may have two different meanings, one of which makes them a mere accidental content of the national consciousness, whereas the other establishes them as necessary, essential, and unfailing constituents. For they may have a merely natural value, or they may have a moral and spiritual one. Our birth-land, which nourished us in our infancy, and now shelters the bodies of our parents, the mountains and the shores that surround it and individualise it, these are natural entities. They are not man-made; we cannot claim them, nor can we fasten our existence to them. Even our speech, our religion itself, which do indeed live in the human mind, may yet be considered as natural facts similar to the geographical accidents which give boundaries and elevation to the land of a people. We may, abstractly, look upon our language as that one which was spoken before we were born, by our departed ancestors who somehow produced this spiritual patrimony of which we now have the use and enjoyment, very much in the same way that we enjoy the sunlight showered upon us by nature. In this same way a few, perhaps many, conceive of religion: they look upon it as something bequeathed and inherited, and not therefore as the fruit of our own untiring faith and the correlate of our actual personality. All these elements in so far as they are natural are evidently extraneous to our personality. We do dwell within this peninsula cloistered by the Alps; we delight in this luminous sky, in our charming shores smiled upon by the waters of the Mediterranean. But if we emigrate from this lovely abode, if under the stress of economic motives we traverse the ocean and gather, a number of us, somewhere across the Atlantic; and there, united by the natural tie of common origin, and fastened by the identity of speech, we maintain ourselves as a special community, with common interests and peculiar moral affinities, then, in spite of the severance from our native peninsula, we have preserved our nationality: Italy has crossed the ocean in our wake. Not only can we sunder ourselves from our land, but we may even relinquish our customs, forget our language, abandon our religion; or we may, within our own fatherland, be kept separate by peculiar historical traditions, by differences of dialects or even of language, by religion, by clashing interests, and yet respond with the same sentiment and the same soul to the sound of one Name, to the colours of one flag, to the summons of common hopes, to the alarm of common dangers.

And it is then that we feel ourselves to be a people; then are we a nation. It is not what we put within this concept that gives consistency and reality to the concept itself; it is the act of spiritual energy whereby we cling to a certain element or elements in the consciousness of that collective personality to which we feel we belong. Nationality consists not in content which may vary, but in the form which a certain content of human consciousness assumes when it is felt to constitute a nation's character.

But this truth is still far from being recognised. Its existence is not even suspected by those who utilise a materially constituted nationality as a title, that is, an antecedent, and a support for political rights claimed by more or less considerable ethnical aggregates that are more or less developed and more or less prepared to take on the form of free and independent states and to secure recognition of a *de facto* political personality on the strength of an assumed *de jure* existence.

This truth, however, was grasped by the profound intuition of Mazzini, the apostle of nationalities, the man who roused our national energies, and whose irresistible call awakened Italy and powerfully impelled her to affirm her national being. Even from the first years of the *Giovine Italia* he insisted that Italy, when still merely an idea, prior to her taking on a concrete and actual political reality, was not a people and was not a nation. For a nation, he maintained, is not something existing in nature, but a great spiritual reality. Therefore like all that is in and for the spirit, it is never a fact ready to be ascertained, but always a mission, a purpose, something that has to be realised—an action.

The Italians to whom Mazzini spoke were not the people around him. He was addressing that future people which the Italians themselves had to create. And they would create it by fixing their souls on one idea—the idea of a fatherland to be conquered—a sacred idea, so noble that people would live and die for it, as for that sovereign and ultimate Good for which all sacrifices are gladly borne, without which man can not live, outside of which he finds nothing that satisfies him, nothing that is conducive to a life's work. For Mazzini nationality is not inherited wealth, but it is man's own conquest. A people can not faint-heartedly claim from others recognition of their nation, but must themselves demonstrate its existence, realise it by their willingness to fight and die for its independence: independence which is freedom and unity and constitutes the nation. It is not true that first comes the nation and then follows the state; the nation is the state when it has triumphed over the enemy, and has overcome the oppression, which till then were hindering its formation. It is not therefore a vague aspiration or a faint wish, but an active faith, an energetic volition which creates, in the freed political Power, the reality of its own moral personality and of its collective consciousness. Hence the lofty aim of Mazzini in insisting that Italy should not be made with the help of foreigners but should be a product of the revolution, that is, of its own will.

And truly the nation is, substantially, as Mazzini saw and firmly believed, the common will of a people which affirms itself and thus secures self-realisation. A nation is a nation only when it wills to be one. I said, when it really wills, not when it merely says it does. It must therefore act in such a manner as to realise its own personality in the form of the State beyond which there is no collective will, no common personality of the people. And it must act seriously, sacrificing the individual to the collective whole, and welcoming martyrdom, which in every case is but the sacrifice of the individual to the universal, the lavishing of our own self to the ideal for which we toil.

From this we are not, however, to infer that a nation can under no circumstances exist prior to the formation of its State. For if this formation means the formal proclamation or the recognition by other States, it surely does pre-exist. But it does not if we consider that the proclamation of sovereignty is a moment in a previously initiated process, and the effect of pre-existing forces already at work; which effect is never definite because a State, even after it has been constituted, continues to develop in virtue of those very forces which produced it; so that it is constantly renewing and continually reconstituting itself. Hence a State is always a future. It is that state which this very day we must set up, or rather at this very instant, and with all our future efforts bent to that political ideal which gleams before us, not only in the light of a beautiful thought, but as the irresistible need of our own personality.

The nation therefore is as intimately pertinent and native to our own being as the State, considered as Universal Will, is one with our concrete and actual ethical personality. Italy for us is the fatherland which lives in our souls as that complex and lofty moral idea which we are realising. We realise it in every instant of our lives, by our feelings, and by our thoughts, by our speech and by our imagination, indeed, by our whole life which concretely flows into that Will which is the State and which thus makes itself felt in the world. And this Will, this State is Italy, which has fought and won; which has struggled for a long time amid errors and sorrows, hopes and dejection, manifestations of strength and confessions of weakness, but always with a secret thought, with a deep-seated aspiration which sustained her throughout her entire ordeal, now exalting her in the flush of action, now, in the critical moment of resistance, confirming and fortifying her by the undying faith in ultimate triumph. This nation, which we all wish to raise to an ever loftier station of honour and of beauty, even though we differ as to the means of attaining this end, is it not the substance of our personality,—of that personality which we possess not as individuals who drift with the current, but as men who have a powerful self-consciousness and who look upward for their destiny?

If we thus understand the nation, it follows that not only every man must bear the imprint of his nationality, but that also there is no true science, no man's science, which is not national. The ancients believed, in conformity with the teachings of the Greeks, that science soars outside of the human life, above the vicissitudes of mortals, beyond the current of history, which is troubled by the fatal conflicts of error, by falterings and doubts, and by the unsatisfied thirst for knowledge. Truth, lofty, pure, motionless, and unchangeable, was to them the fixed goal toward which the human mind moved, but completely severed from it and transcendent. This concept, after two thousand years of speculation, was to reveal itself as abstract and therefore fallacious,—abstract from the human mind, which at every given instance mirrors itself in such an image of truth, ever gazing upon an eternal ideal but always intent on reshaping it in a new and more adequate form. The modern world, at first with dim consciousness, and guided rather by a fortunate intuition than by a clear concept of its own real orientation, then with an ever clearer, ever more critical conviction, has elaborated a concept which is directly antithetical to the classical idea of a celestial truth removed from the turmoil of earthly things. It has accordingly and by many ways reached the conclusion that reality, lofty though it be, and truth itself, which nourishes the mind and alone gives validity to human thought, are in life itself, in the development of the mind, in the growth of the human personality, and that this personality, though ideally beyond our grasp, is yet in the concrete always historical and actual, and realises itself in its immanent value. It therefore creates its truth and its world. Modern philosophy and modern consciousness no longer point to values which, transcending history, determine its movement and its direction by external finalities: they show to man that the lofty aim which is his law is within himself; that it is in his ever unsatisfied personality as it unceasingly strains upward towards its own ideal.

Science is no longer conceived to-day as the indifferent pure matter of the intellect. It is an interest which invests the entire person, extols it and with it moves onward in the eternal rhythm of an infinite development. Science is not for us the abstract contemplation of yore; it is self-consciousness that man acquires, and by means of which he actuates his own humanity. And therefore science is no longer an adornment or an equipment of the mind, considered as diverse to its content; it is culture, and the formation of this very mind. So that whenever science is as yet so abstract that it seems not to touch the person and fails to form it or transform it, it is an indication that it is not as yet true science.

So we conclude thus: he who distinguishes his person from his knowledge is ignorant of the nature of knowledge. The modern teacher knows of no science which is not an act of a personality. It knows no personality which admits of being sequestered from its ideas, from its ways of thinking and of feeling, from that greater life which is the nation. Concrete personality then is nationality, and therefore neither the school nor science possesses a learning which is not national.

And for this reason therefore our educational reforms which are inspired by the teachings of modern idealistic philosophy demand that the school be animated and vivified by the spiritual breath of the fatherland.

CHAPTER II

EDUCATION AND PERSONALITY

It is essential at the very outset to understand clearly what is meant by *concrete personality*, and why the particular or empirical personality, as we are usually accustomed to consider it, is nothing more than an abstraction.

Ordinarily, relying on the most obvious data of experience, we are led to believe that the sphere of our moral personality coincides exactly with the sphere of our physical person, and is therefore limited and contained by the surface of our material body. We consider this body in itself as an indivisible whole, with such reciprocal correspondence and interdependence of its parts as to become a veritable system. It seems to us also that this system moves in space as a whole when the body is displaced, continuing to remain united as long as it exists. We look upon it as though it were separated from all other bodies, whether of the same or of different kinds, in such a manner that it excludes others from the place it occupies, and is itself in turn excluded by them. One body then, one physical person, one moral personality—that moral personality which each one of us recognises and affirms by the consciousness of the ego.

And in fact when I walk I am not a different person from when I think. My ego remains the same whether my body moves through space or whether my mind inwardly meditates. Impenetrability, which is possessed by matter, seems to be also a property of human individualism.

From my ego every other ego is apparently excluded. What I am no one else can be, and I in turn cannot be confused with another person. Those of my fellow beings that are most intimately, most closely related to me seem yet as completely external to me, as thoroughly sundered from my spirit, as their bodies are from mine. My father, my brother are dead. They have vanished from this world in which I nevertheless continue to exist; just as a stone remains in its place and is in no way affected when another stone near by is removed; or as a mutilated pedestal may still remain to remind the onlooker of the statue that was torn away.

Hundreds of individuals assemble to listen to the words of an orator. But no necessary ties exist between the various persons; and when the speaking is over, each one goes his way confident that he has lost no part of himself and that he has maintained his individuality absolutely unaltered.

Our elders lived on this planet when we had not yet arrived. After we came, they gradually withdrew, one after the other. And just as they had been able to exist without us, so shall we continue to live without them, and away from them develop our personality. For each one of us, according to this point of view, has his own being within himself, his own particular destiny. Every man makes of himself the centre of his world, of that universe which he has created with deeds and thoughts: a universe of ideas, of images, of concepts, of systems, which are all in his brain; a universe of values, of desirable goods and of abhorred evils, all of which are rooted in his own individual will, in his character, and originate from the peculiar manner in which he personally colours this world and conceives the universe.

What is another man's sorrow to me? What part have I in his joys? And how can the science of Aristotle or of Galileo be anything to me, since I do not know them, since I cannot read their books, and am totally unfamiliar with their teachings? And the unknown wayfarer who passes by, wrapped in his thoughts, what does he care for my loftiest conceptions, for the songs that well forth from the depths of my soul? The hero's exploit brings no glory to us; the heinous deed of the criminal makes us shudder indeed, but drives no pangs of remorse through our conscience. For every one of us has his own body and his own particular soul. Every one, in short, is himself independently of what others may be.

This conception, which we ordinarily form of our personality, and on which we erect the system of our practical life in all our manifold relations with other individuals, is an abstract concept. For when we thus conceive our being, we see but a single side of it and that the least important: we fail to grasp that part which reveals all that is spiritual, and human, and truly and peculiarly ours. I shall not here investigate how the human personality has two aspects so totally different one from the other; and in what remote depths we must search for the common root of these two contrasting and apparently contradictory manifestations. Our task for the moment is to establish within ourselves through reflection the firm conviction that we are not lone individualities: that there is another and a better part of us, an element which is the very antithesis of the particular, that one, namely, which is the deep-seated source of our nature, by which we cease, each one of us, to be in irreducible opposition to the rest of humanity, and become instead what all the others are or what we want them to be.

In order to fix our attention on this more profound aspect of our inner life, I shall take as an example one of those elements which are contained in the concept of nationality, Language. Language it must be remembered does not belong *per se* to nationality; it belongs to it in virtue of an act by which a will, a personality, affirms itself with a determined content. We must now point out the abstract character of that concept by which language, which is a constituent element of our personality, is usually ascribed to what is merely particular in it.

That language is a peculiar and constituent element of personality is quite obvious. Through language we speak not to others only, but to ourselves also. Speaking to ourselves means seeing within ourselves our own ideas, our soul, our very self in short,—it means self-consciousness, as the philosophers say, and therefore self-control, clear vision of our acts, knowledge of what stirs within us; it means, therefore, living not after the manner of dumb animals, but as rational beings, as men. Man cannot think, have consciousness of himself, reason, without first expressing all that to himself. Man has been defined as a rational animal; he may also be defined as the speaking animal. The remark is as old as Aristotle.

Man, however, this animal endowed with the faculty of speaking, is not man in general who never was, but the real man, the historical man, actually existing. And he does not speak a general language, but a certain definite one.

When I speak before a public, I can but use my language, the Italian language. And I exist, that is I affirm myself, I come into real being, by thinking in conformity with my real personality, in so far as I speak, and speak this language of mine. *My* language, the *Italian* language. Here lies the problem. Were

I not to speak, or were I to speak otherwise than I know how, I would not be myself. This manner of expressing myself is then an intrinsic trait of my personality. But this speech which makes me what I am, and which therefore intimately belongs to me, could it possibly be mine, could I use it, mould it into my own life-substance, if, mine though it be, it were yet enclosed within me in the manner that every particle of my flesh is contained within my body, having nothing in common with any other part of matter co-existing in space? Could my language in short really be my language, if it belonged exclusively to me, to what I have called my particular or empirical personality?

A simple reflection will suffice to show that my language, like a beacon of light, inwardly illumines my Thought, and renders visible to me every movement and every sense, only because this language is not exclusively my own. It is that same language through which I grasp the ancient authors of Italy. I read about Francesca da Rimini and Count Ugolino, and find them within me in the emotion of my throbbing soul. I read of Petrarch's golden-haired Laura, of Ariosto's Angelica, fair love of chivalrous men and the unhappy friend of youthful Medoro. I read of the cunning art whereby the Florentine secretary, in his keen speculative discourses, sought to establish the principalities and the state of Italy. I read of the many loves, sorrows, discoveries and sublime concepts which did not blossom forth from my spirit, but which, once expressed by the great men of my country, have, because of their merits, continued to exist in the imagination, in the intellect, in the hearts of Italians, and have thus constituted a literature, a light-shedding history which is the life of language, varied indeed and restless, but ever the same. This is the language which I first heard from the dear lips of my mother, which gradually and constantly I made my own by studying and reflecting on the books and on the conversations of those who for years, or days, or instants, were with me in my native town and exchanged with me their thoughts and their sentiments; the language which unites to me all those who, living or dead, together constitute this which I call and feel to be my own people.

Yet I might want to break away with my speech from this glorious communion. I might try to demonstrate to myself that my speech is exclusively mine, and surely I would thus accomplish something. I would produce an exception which in this case too would serve to confirm the rule.

For surely a man may devise a cryptic language, a cipher, a jargon. Secret codes and conventional cants are resorted to by individuals who have some reason to conceal their meaning from others. Such individuals, however, can form but very small groups, and because of the artificial character of their communications never may constitute a nation. An artificial jargon of this sort is however a language of some kind: it must be, since art imitates nature. It complies with the law that is immanent in the peculiar nature of language, namely, that there be nothing secret or hidden in it, for speech and in general every form of spiritual activity invests a community and aims at universality. The jargon is possible only because of the key by which it may be translated back into the common language. Give a ciphered document to the cryptographer; by study and ingenuity—that is by the use of that very intelligence which arbitrarily combined the cipher—he discovers the key; thus he too breaks up the artificial form, and draws from it the natural flow of a speech that is intelligible to all those who speak the same national tongue. And again, words as they flow from the inspired bosom of the poet, when they first appear in the freshness of the new artistic creation, do have something that is cryptic. That language is the poet's own; it never had been used by another; a jargon before it is deciphered may be and is the language of a particular personality. But if we look more attentively, we shall see that in both cases the language is the language of the community. The inspired poet does indeed speak to himself, but with the consciousness of a potential audience, he utters a word to himself which must eventually be intelligible to others because it is by its nature intelligible. In the conditions in which the poet finds himself when speaking, he must use that word and no other, and any other person in those same spiritual conditions would use, could not help using, the same word. For his word is the Word, the one that is required by the circumstances. And since he is a poet, a serious mind uttering a word which needs no translation, it will be the word of his own people first and then of humanity at large, in so far as its beauty will inspire men of different nations and of diverse speech with the desire of learning the poet's own intimate language.

All this is true because the spirit is universal activity, which, far from separating men, unites them. It realises historically its universality in the community of the family, of the city, of the district, and of the nation, and in every form of intimate aggregation and of fusion which history may call into being.

Language may or may not be in the formation of a man's nationality. What however must be ever present is the Will by which man every moment of his life renovates his own personality. Can the Will, by which each one of us is what he is, be his own Will, exclusively his own? Or is the Will itself, like language, not perhaps a national heirloom, but surely a common act, a communion of life, in such a way that we live our own life while living the life of the nation?

Of course, in the abstract, as I have explained above, my will is particular. But we must be reminded that Will is one thing, and faint wishing another. There is such a thing as real effective volition, and there is something which strives to be such and fails; this latter we might call "velleity." Real will does not rest satisfied with intentions, designs, or sterile desires; it acts, and by its effectiveness it reveals itself, and by its value shows its reality. And our being results not from velleities but from the real will. We are not what we might conditionally desire to be, but what we actually will to be. A velleity we might say is the will directed to an end which is either relatively or absolutely impossible; will is that which becomes effective.

But, then, when is it that my will really is effective, really *wills*? I am a citizen of a state which has power; this power, this will of the state expresses itself to me in laws which I must obey. The transgression of laws, if the state is in existence, bears with it the inevitable punishment of the transgressor, that is, the application of that law which the offender has refused to recognise. The state is supported by the inviolability of laws, of those sacred laws of the land which Socrates, as Plato tells us, taught his pupils to revere. I, then, as a citizen of my country, am bound by its Law in such a manner that to will its transgression is to aim at the impossible. If I did so, I should be indulging in vain velleities, in which my personality, far from realising itself, would on the contrary be disintegrated and scattered. I then want what the law wants me to will.

It makes no difference that, from a material and explicit point of view, a system of positive law does not coincide throughout with the sphere of my activity, and that therefore the major part of the standards of my conduct must be determined by the inner dictates of my particular conscience. For it is the Will of the State that determines the limits between the moral and the juridical, between what is imposed by the law of the land and what is demanded by the ethical conscience of the individual. And there is no limit which pre-exists to the line by which the constituent and legislative power of the State delimits the sphere subject to its sanctions. So that positively or negatively, either by command or by permission, our whole conduct is subject to that will by which the State establishes its reality.

But the Will of the State does not manifest itself solely by the enactments of positive legislation. It opens to private initiative such courses of action as may presumably be carried on satisfactorily without the impulse and the direct control of the sovereign power. But this concession has a temporary character, and the State is ever ready to intervene as soon as the private management ceases to be effective. So that even in the exercise of what seems the untrammelled will of the individual we discern the power of the State; and the individual is free to will something only because the sovereign power wants him to.

So that in reality this apparently autonomous particular will is the will of the state not expressed in terms of positive legislation, there being no need of such an expression. But since the essence of law is not in the expression of it, but in the will which dictates it, or observes it, or enforces the observance of it, in the will, in short, that wills it, it follows that the law exists even though unwritten.

In the way of conclusion, then, it may be said that I, as a citizen, have indeed a will of my own; but that upon further investigation my will is found to coincide exactly with the will of the State, and I want anything only in so far as the State wants me to want it.

Could it possibly be otherwise? Such an hypothesis overwhelms me at the very thought of it. For it would come to this,—that I exist and my state does not:—the state in which I was born, which sustained and protected me before I saw the light of day, which formed and guaranteed to me this communion of life; the state in which I have always lived, which has constituted this spiritual substance, this world in which I support myself, and which I trust will never fail me even though it does change constantly. I could, it is true, ignore this close bond by which I am tied and united to that great will which is the will of my country. I might balk and refuse to obey its laws. But acting thus, I would be indulging in what I have called velleities. My personality, unable to transform the will of the state, would be overcome and suppressed by it.

Let us however assume for a moment that I might in the innermost depths of my being segregate myself. Averse to the common will and to the law of the land, I decide to proclaim over the boundless expanse of my thought the proud independence of my ego, as a lone, inaccessible summit rising out of the solitude. Up to a certain point this hypothesis is verified constantly by the manner in which my personality freely becomes actual. But even then I do not act as a particular being: it is the universal power that acts through my personal will.

For when we effectively observe the law, with true moral adhesion and in thorough sincerity, the law becomes part of ourselves, and our actions are the direct results of our convictions,—of the necessity of our convictions. For every time we act, inwardly we see that such must be our course; we must have a clear intuition of this necessity. The Saint who has no will but the will of God intuitively sees necessity in his norm. So does the sinner in his own way: but his norm is erroneous and therefore destined to fail. Every criminal in transgressing the law obeys a precept of his own making which is in opposition to the enactments of the state. And in so doing he creates almost a state of his own, different from the one which historically exists and must exist because of certain good reasons, the excellence of which the criminal himself will subsequently realise. From the unfortunate point of view which he has taken, the transgressor is justified in acting as he does, and to such an extent that no one in his position, as he thinks, could possibly take exception to it. His will is also universal; if he were allowed to, if it were possible for him, he would establish new laws in place of the old ones: he would set up another state over the ruins of the one which he undermines. And what else does the tyrant when he destroys the freedom of the land and substitutes a new state for the crushed Commonwealth? In the same manner the rebel does away with the despot, starts a revolution and establishes liberty if he is successful; if not, he is overcome and must again conform his will to the will of that state which he has not been able to overthrow. So then, I exercise my true volition whenever the will of my state acts in my personal will, or rather when my will is the realisation of the will of a super-national group in which my state co-exists with other states, acting upon them, and being re-acted upon in reciprocal determinations. Or perhaps better still, when the entire world wills in me. For my will, I shall say it once again, is not individual but universal, and in the political community by which individuals are united into a higher individuality, historically distinct from other similar ones, we must see a form of universality.

For this reason, then, we are justified in saying that our personality is particular when we consider it abstractly, but that concretely it realises itself as a universal and therefore also as a national personality. This conception is of fundamental importance for those of us who live in the class-room and have made of teaching our life's occupation, our ultimate end, and the real purpose of our existence. For in this conception of human activities we find the solution of a problem that has been present in the minds of thinking men ever since they began to reflect on the subject of education, or, in other words, from time immemorial. Education, we must remember, is not a fact, if by fact we mean, as we should, something that has happened, or is wont to happen, or must inevitably take place in virtue of the constancy of the law which governs it. We teachers are all sincerely convinced that education, as we speak of it, as it draws our interests, for which we work, and which we strive to improve, is not now what it was before. For there is no education that works out in conformity with natural laws. It is a free act of ours, the vocation of our souls, our duty as men. By it more nobly than by any other action man is enabled to actualise his superior nature. Animals do not educate: even though they do raise their young ones they yet form no family, no ethical organism with members differentiated and reciprocally correlated. But we freely, by an act of our conscience, recognise our children, as we do our parents and our brothers; and we discern our fellow-beings in ourselves and ourselves in others; and by the growth of our own we unconsciously develop the personality of others; and therefore in the family, in the city, in any community, we constitute one spirit, with common needs that are satisfied by the operations of individual activity which is a social activity.

Man has been called a political or a social animal. He might therefore be considered also as an educating animal. For we do not merely educate the young ones, our young ones. Education being spiritual action bearing on the spirit, we really educate all those that are in any way and by any relations whatsoever connected with us, whether or not they belong to our family or to our school, as long as they concur with us in constituting a complete social entity. And we not only train those of minor age, who are as yet under tutelage, and still frequent the schools and are busily intent upon developing and improving their skill, their character, their culture. We also educate the adults, the grown-up men and women, the aged; for there is no man alive who does not daily add to his intellectual equipment, who does not derive some advantage from his human associations, who could not appropriately repeat the statement of the Roman emperor—*nulla dies sine linea*. Man always educates.

But here, as in every other manifestation of his spiritual activity, man does not behave in sole conformity with instinct; he does not teach by abandoning himself, so to speak, to the force of natural determinism. He is fully aware of his own doings. He keeps his eyes open on his own function, so that he may attain the end by the shortest course, that he may without wasting his energies derive from them the best possible results. For man reflects.

It is evident then that education is not a scheme which permits pedagogues and pedants to interfere with their theories and lucubrations in this sacred task of love, which binds the parents to the children, brings old and young together, and keeps mankind united in its never ceasing ascent. Before the word came into being, the thing, as is usually the case, already existed. Before there was a science and an incumbent for the chair, there existed something that was the life of this science and therefore the justification of the chair. There was the intent reflectiveness of man, who in compliance with the divine saying, "Know thyself," was becoming conscious of his own work, and therefore, unwilling to abandon his actions to external impulses, began to question everything. What the lower animal does naturally and unerringly through its infallible instinct, man achieves by the restless scrutiny of his mind. Ever thoughtful, always yearning for the better, he searches and explores, often stumbling in error, but ever rising out of it to a higher station of learning and of art. Our education is human, because it is an action and not a fact; because it is a problem that we always solve and have to keep solving for ever.

This intuitive truth is demonstrated experimentally to us by the very lives we live as educators. As long as the freshness of our vocation lasts, as long as we can remain free from mechanical routine and from the impositions of fixed habits; as long as we are able to consider every new pupil with renewed interest, discover in him a different soul, unlike that of any other that we have previously come in contact with, and differing within itself from day to day; as long as it is still possible for us to enter the class-room thrilled and throbbing in the anticipation of new truths to reveal, of novel experiments to perform, of unexpected difficulties to overcome, in the full consciousness of the rapid motion of a life ever renewed in us and around us by the incoming generations, that flow to us and ebb away unceasingly towards life and death; so long shall we really live and love the teacher's life, so long shall we demonstrate to ourselves and to others the truth I have already affirmed.

We teachers should be constantly on our guard against the dangers of routine, against the belief that we have but to repeat the same old story in the same class-room, to the same kind of distant, blank faces, staring at us in dreary uniformity from the same benches. We shall continue to be educators only as long as we are able to feel that every instant of our life's work is a new instant, and that education therefore is a problem that insistently stimulates our ingenuity to an ever renewed solution.

Now the most important of all tasks, ancient and modern, in the field of education is this,—the task of the teacher to represent the Universal to his pupils, the Universal, of course, as historically determined. Scientific thought, customs, laws, religious beliefs are brought before the pupil's mind, not as the science, the laws, the religion of the teacher, but as those of humanity, of his country, of his period. And the pupil is the particular individual who, having entered upon the process of education, and being submitted, so to speak, to the yoke of the school, ceases to enjoy his former liberty in the pursuit of a spiritual endowment and in the formation of his character, and, in consequence of this educational pressure, bends compliantly before the common law. Hence the world-old opposition to the coercive power of the school, and the outcry raised from time to time against the privilege demanded by the educator, who on the strength of the assumedly higher quality of his beliefs, his learning, his taste, or his moral conscience, claims to interfere with the spontaneous development of a personality in quest of itself.

On one side education undoubtedly assumes the task of developing freedom, for the aim of education is to produce men; and man is worthy of this name only when he is a master of himself, capable of initiating his own acts, responsible for his deeds, able to discern and assimilate the ideas which he accepts and professes, affirms and propagates, so that whatever he says, thinks, or does, really comes from him. Our children are said to be properly raised when they give evidence of being able to take care of themselves without the help of our guidance and advice. And we trust that we have accomplished our task as educators when our pupils have made our language their own and are able to tell us new things originally thought out by them. Freedom then must be the result of education.

But on the other hand, teaching implies an action exercised on another mind, and education cannot therefore result in the relinquishment and abandonment of the pupil. The educator must awaken interests that without him would for ever lie dormant. He must direct the learner towards an end which he would be unable to estimate properly if left alone, and must help him to overcome the otherwise unsurmountable obstacles that beset his progress. He must, in short, transfuse into the pupil something of himself, and out of his own spiritual substance create elements of the pupil's character, mind, and will. But the acts which the pupil performs in consequence of his training will, in a certain measure, be those of his teacher; and education will therefore have proved destructive of that very liberty with which the pupil was originally endowed. Is it not true that people constantly attribute to early family influences and to environment—that is, to education—the good and the bad in the deeds of the mature man?

This is the form in which the problem usually presents itself. The mind of the educator is therefore torn by two conflicting forces: the desire zealously to watch and control the pupil's growth and direct his evolution along the course that seems quickest and surest for his complete development; and, on the other hand, the fear that he may kill fertile seeds, stifle with presumptuous interference the spontaneous life of the spirit in its personal impulses, and clothe the individual with a garment that is not adapted for him,—crush him under the weight of a leaden cape.

The solution of this problem must be sought in the concrete conception of individual personality; and this will be the theme of the next chapter. But I must at the very outset utter an emphatic word of warning. My solution does not remove all difficulties; it cannot be used as a key to open all doors. For as I have repeatedly stated, the value of education consists in the persistence of the problems, ever solved and yet ever clamouring for a new solution, so that we may never feel released from the obligation of thinking.

My solution must be simply accepted as affording a guidance by which different people may, along more or less converging lines, approach their particular objectives. For the problem presents itself under ever-changing forms, and demands a continuous development, and almost a progressive interpretation of the concept which I am going to offer as an aid to its solution. No effort of thinking, once completed, will ever exonerate us from thinking, from thinking unceasingly, from thinking more and more intensively.

CHAPTER III

THE FUNDAMENTAL ANTIMONY OF EDUCATION

A MORE precise determination must now be given to the problem, touched upon in the preceding chapter, which might be called the *fundamental antinomy of education,* understanding by "antinomy" the conflict of two contradictory affirmations, either one of which appears to be true and irrefutable.

The two contradictory affirmations are (1) that man as the object of education is and must be free, and (2) that education denies man's freedom. They might perhaps be better re-stated in this way: (1) Education presupposes freedom in man and strives to increase it. (2) Education treats man by ignoring the freedom he may originally be endowed with, and acts in such a way as to strip him entirely of it.

Each of the two propositions must be taken, not as an approximate affirmation, but as an exact enunciation of an irrefutable truth. Therefore freedom here means full and absolute liberty; and when we speak of the negation of freedom, we mean that education as such, and as far as it is carried, destroys the freedom of the pupil.

Let us first see precisely what is meant by this *freedom* which we attribute to man. Each one of us firmly even though obscurely possesses some conception of it. Every one of us, even though unfamiliar with the controversies that have raged for centuries on the question of free will, must have sometimes been compelled by the conditions of human life to face the difficulties that beset the concept of man's freedom, and must have been led to question, if not to deny outright, the proposition that man is free. But on the other hand, every one of us has to admit that the experience of life has confirmed the belief in our freedom which for a moment had been shaken by doubt and perplexity; and that faith, instinctive and incoercible, outlives every time the onslaughts of negation.

By liberty we mean that power peculiar to man by which he moulds himself into his actual being and originates the series of facts in which every one of his actions becomes manifest. In nature, all facts, or, as they are called, all phenomena appear to us to be so interrelated as to constitute a universal system in which no phenomenon can ever be considered as absolutely beginning, but can in each case be traced back to a preceding phenomenon as its cause, or at any rate as the condition of its intelligibility. The condensation of the aqueous vapour in the cloud produces rain; but vapour would not condense without the action of temperature, nor again would temperature be lowered without the concurrence of certain meteorological facts which modify it, etc.

But we believe on the other hand that man derives from no one but himself the principles and the causes of his actions. So that whenever we see in his conduct the necessary effects of causes that have acted on his character or momentarily on his will, we cease to consider such acts as partaking of that moral value through which man's conduct is really human and completely sundered from the instinctive impulses of the lower animal, and even more so from the behaviour of the forces of inanimate matter.

We may in certain moments deny a man's humanity, and see in his conduct only brutal impulse, fierce cruelty, and unreasoning bestiality. In such moments we cannot stop either to praise or to blame him. We do not even strive to reason with him, for we feel that arguments would produce no impression on his obdurate consciousness. Only through force can we defend ourselves from his violence; against him we must use the same weapon that we rely upon in our struggle with the wild beasts and the blind forces of nature. We then become aware that our soul refuses to recognise such an individual as a man. We esteem man to be such only when we believe that we can influence him by words, by arguments that are directed to reason, which is the birthright of man, and when we are able to prevail upon those sentiments of his which, as peculiarly human, appear to be almost the foundation and the understructure of rational activity. This reason and these sentiments it must be remembered are the peculiar constituents of human personality. They cannot be imparted to man from the outside. They are in him from the very start even if only as germs which he must himself cultivate, and which will, when developed, enable him to act consciously, that is, with full knowledge of his acts. This knowledge is twofold, for he knows what he is doing, and he knows also how his actions must be judged. And so all the causes that bear on him are practically of no weight in determining a course which he will take, if he is a man, only after the approval of his own judgment. What is more natural than to avenge an insult, and to harbour hatred against an enemy? And yet from the viewpoint of morals, man is worthy of this name only in so far as he is able to resist his overpowering passions and to release himself from that force which compels him to offset harm with more harm, and meet hatred with hatred. He must pardon; he must love the enemy who harms him. Only when a man is capable of understanding the beauty of this pardon and of such love, only when, attracted by their beauty, he acts no longer in compliance with the force of instinctive nature, does he cease to count as a purely natural being, and lift himself to a higher level into that moral world where he must progressively exhibit his human activities. Whether man is equal to this task or not, we must demand that he satisfy this requirement before we admit him into the society of mankind. He must have in himself the strength to withstand the pressure of external forces which may act on his will, on his personality, on that inner centre from which his personality moves towards us, speaks to us, and thus affirms its existence. We make these demands on him; and as we extol him when by his deeds he shows sufficient capacity for his human rôle, so we also blame him every time we find him through weakness yielding to these forces. And the import of our blame is that he is responsible for not having the power which he should have had.

It is of no importance that out of compassion, or through sympathy for human frailty, we lighten or even entirely remove the burden of our censure. Our disapproval of the deficiency, even though unexpressed, remains within us side by side with the conviction that the delinquent may do a great deal, nay, must, aided by us in the future, do everything in his power to meet successfully the opposing forces of evil. We surely cannot abandon the unfortunate wretch who through moral impotence—whether it be the craven submissiveness of the coward, or the undaunted violence of the overbearing brute—commits an evil deed. We feel it our duty to watch over him and help him on the road to redemption, because of our firm conviction that he will eventually redeem himself; for he is after all a man like the rest of us, and possesses therefore within himself the source and principle of a life which will raise him from the slough in which he lies immersed.

There is, however, a pseudo-science which, on the basis of superficial and inaccurate observations, dogmatically asserts that certain forms of criminality give evidence of original and irremediable moral depravity; and that therefore persons tainted with it are fatally condemned never to heed sufficiently the voice of duty and ever to yield to their perverted instinct, which presses unrestrained from the depths of their being at the slightest provocation and on the occasion of the most insignificant clash with other human beings.

This is the doctrine of the modern school of criminal anthropology which has spread throughout the world the fame of some Italian writers. Though their influence is now on the wane, their observations on the pathological nature of criminal acts have contributed to establish the need of a more humane treatment of offenders,—more humane because rational and effective.

Their doctrine falls in with a series of systems which at all times, and always for materialistic motives,—materialistic even though disguised under religious and theological robes,—have denied to man that power which we call liberty, compelling him therefore to bend down under the stress of universal determinism, and to behave as the drop that forever moves with the motion of the boundless ocean, an insignificant particle of the entire watery mass. What force intrinsic to this drop could ever stop it on the crest of the wave which hurls it forward? Man, they say, is no different from this drop: from the time of his birth to the instant of his death, hemmed in by all the beings of nature, acted upon by innumerable concurrent causes, he is pushed and dragged at every moment by the irresistible current of all the forces of the entire mass of the universe. At times he may delude himself into believing that he has lifted his consciousness out of the huge flood, that it is within his power to resist, to stop it as far as he is concerned, and to control it; that, in short, it rests with him to fashion his own destiny. But alas! this very belief, this illusion is the determined result of the forces acting upon him: it is the inevitable effect of the play of his representations,—representations which have not their origin in him, but have been impressed upon him by outside forces. So that the illusion of independence is but a mocking confirmation of the impossibility of escaping the rush of fatal currents.

I shall not here give a critical presentation of the arguments by which systems such as these have established the absence of freedom in man. In our present need, a single remark will suffice, and will permit us, I believe, to cut the discussion short. A great German philosopher, who had conceived science and reality, which is the object of science, in such a way as to preclude the possibility of finding in reality a place for man's freedom, noticed that freedom, in spite of all the difficulties which science encounters in accounting for it, corresponds and answers to an invincible certitude in our soul, invincible because a postulate of our moral conscience. That is to say, that whatever our scientific theories and ideas, we have a conscience which imposes a law upon us,—a law which, though not promulgated and sustained by any external force, or rather because of it, compels us in a manner which is absolute. This law is the moral law. It requires no speculative demonstration. The scrutiny of philosophers might not be helpful to it. It rises spontaneously and naturally from the intimate recesses of our spirit; and it demands from our will, from the will of the most uncouth man, an unconditional respect. What sense would there be in the word duty, if man were able to do only those things which his own nature, or worse still, nature in general, compelled him to do? The existence of duty implies a power to fulfil it. And the certitude of our moral obligations rests on the conviction that we have within us the power to meet them. We can answer the call of duty because we are free.

This consideration, important as it is, cannot however be considered as sufficient. For this moral conscience, this certitude with which the moral conscience affirms the existence of an unavoidable duty, might also be an illusion determined in us by natural causes. Nothing hinders us from thinking thus, and surely there is no contradiction implied in this explanation, which in fact because of its possibilities is offered by the philosophers of materialism.

But the need of liberty is not solely felt when we strive to conceive our moral obligations; freedom is not only the ground for existence, the *raison d'être* of moral law, as Kant thought—for he is the philosopher to whom I alluded above;—no! freedom is the condition of the entire life of the spirit. And the materialist who, having destroyed liberty as a condition of moral conduct, believes that he is still able to think, that his intellectual activity can proceed undisturbed after his faith in the objective value and in the reality of moral laws has been abandoned, such a materialistic thinker is totally mistaken. For without freedom, man not only is unable to speak of duty, but he cannot speak at all,—not even of his materialistic views. This is the same as saying that the negation of liberty is unthinkable.

A brief reflection will make this clearer. We speak to others or to ourselves in so far as we think, or say something or make affirmations. Let us suppose that ideas be present to our minds (as people have sometimes imagined) without our looking at them, without our noticing them. Such ideas would have offered themselves in vain, in the same way that many material objects remain unseen before us, because we do not turn our gaze toward them. Every object of the mind, that is, every thought, can only be thought because in addition to it we too are in the mind: our mental activity is there, the ego of the thinking man, the subject which is ready to affirm the object. And thought proper consists in this affirmation of the object by the subject. Now, the subject, that is, man, must be as free in the affirmation of his thought, by which he thinks something, as he must be free in every one of his actions in order that his action be truly his, and really human. In fact, we demand of man that he give an account of his thoughts as well as of his deeds. We evaluate not only what he does, but also what he thinks; we praise him or we disapprove of him because of his sayings, that is, his thoughts, and we call upon him to correct those thoughts which he should not entertain. In this way we indicate our conviction that the thought of each one of us is not simply a logical consequence of its premises, not an effect determined by a psychic mechanism set in motion by the universal mechanism of which our individual psyche is a part; we are convinced that thought depends upon man, upon his capacity, upon his personality, which is not controlled by any mechanical forces, nor subject to premises which he may no longer modify once he has accepted them. We are the masters of our thinking; and if the vigour of the human personality is indeed shown by the steadfast constancy whereby in practical life we pursue a hard and toilsome course toward an arduous goal, it is revealed just as much by the quickness, the readiness, the assiduousness, the lack of prejudice, the love which we manifest in our search after truth.

It has therefore been said that cognition in man has moral value, and that on the other hand the will is operative in the act of the intellect. Such distinctions are dangerous. But whether we call it will or intellect, the activity which makes us what we are, by which we actualise our personality, also by thinking, it is certain that it is a conscious and discriminating activity, through no force of gravity precipitating on its object, but approaching it with selective freedom of determination. And in the manner that every action aims at the good, because it seems good, and appears in contrast with evil, so every cognition is the affirmation of what to us is or seems to be a truth in opposition to error and falseness. Without the antithesis of good to evil there would be no moral action: without the antithesis of the true to the false there would be no cognition. But the existence of this antithesis implies a choice and therefore the liberty of choosing.

Should we deny freedom, and consequently abandon man to the determinism of the causes acting upon him, we should deny the possibility of distinguishing between good and evil, between true and false. The materialist, therefore, when he rejects freedom, is compelled to affirm that the value which moral conscience attributes to goodness is devoid of any real grounds, and what is worse, that his very statement is thereby stripped of all the value of truth. For he must be inwardly convinced that what he thinks has no reason to be thought and therefore cannot be thought.

The negation of freedom leads to this *absurdum*, to this impossible thought, which is the Thought that is being thought as such, and yet does not admit of being thought. Man, in so far as he thinks, affirms his faith in freedom, and every attempt on his part to uproot this faith from his soul is but a glaring confirmation of its existence. This observation, properly grasped, is sufficient to establish human freedom on a solid ground.

Freedom, moreover, which man needs in order to be human, cannot be, as some have supposed, a relative liberty, limited and restricted by certain conditions, for conditional liberty does not differ from slavery. Here indeed is the very crux of the problem. Every one would readily admit the existence of a limited freedom, and the divergence would then be reduced to a question of degree. But the fact is that freedom must be absolute or not be at all. Matter, that is, every material object, is not free for the very reason that it is limited; whereas the spirit—every spiritual act—is free because it is infinite, and as such not relative to any thing, and therefore absolute.

Any limitation of the spirit would annihilate its liberty. The slave is such because his will is constrained within the bounds imposed upon it by the master's volition. The human spirit is not free in the presence of nature because nature envelops it and enfolds it within narrow confines, which allow only a certain development; and this development therefore cannot be looked upon as a grant of nature but rather as a condemnation, in that it marks out boundaries which cannot be trespassed. The lower animal is not free because even if its actions seem to imply a rationality not very different from that of man, yet in reality its acts, differently from the doings of man, follow the straight line pre-established by instinct, which admits of no original power and allows no individual creation. If there is a limit, there must be something limiting and something limited; there must be a necessary relationship of one to the other, so that the thing limited can in no way free itself from the consequences of this relationship. These consequences are summed up in the impossibility of *being all,* or in other words in the necessity of remaining within limits, and to obey therefore the untransgressable laws set by one's own nature.

This necessity which binds every natural being to the laws of its own nature, this impossibility of being aught else than what is appointed by nature, to be a wolf of necessity, and of necessity to be a lamb; this is the hard lot of natural beings, this is the destiny from which man is ransomed by the power of his freedom.

The sculptor in the fervour of his inspiration, which proceeds from the image that lives in his phantasy, searches eagerly for the marble with which, as though from the very bosom of nature, he may call to life the phantom of his mind. He fails in his search, and his chisel remains, must need remain, inactive. The artist then in the utmost intensity of his creation is baffled by an external impediment, by an obstacle of nature which therefore seems to have the power of limiting his creative power. But when we consider what the artist has created in the statue itself, in this living image of marble, we find nothing that is material. The artist has transfused into the stone an idea, a sentiment, a soul, which we, under the influence of the ravishing power of artistic beauty, are able to seize to the exclusion of all material attributes; as though we no longer possessed eyes for the whiteness of the marble and were deprived of the muscle which gives us the impression of its physical weight. When we are able thus to spiritualise the statue—and we do so every time we get to know it as a work of art—then all limitations that might be imposed on the creative power of the artist disappear. For we see no longer the artist's phantasy, and then his arm, and then his hand, his chisel, the block which he is carving; all we see is the phantasy soaring untrammelled in the infinite world of the artist, with his arm, his hand, his marble, his universe which is totally different from the universe in which the men live who quarry the marble and move it and sell it.

There is a point of view from which we see the spirit limited and enslaved by the conditions in which its life is unfolded. But there is a higher point of view to which we must ascend if we are bent on discovering our freedom. If we say, as the psychologists do, this is a soul and this is a body, here are sensations, there is motion, this is thought within us and that is the world outside of us, then we are obliged to consider the spirit as conditioned by physical happenings to which in some manner our internal determinations correspond. It is not possible to see without eyes and without the light that strikes them. It is equally impossible not to see when we have eyes and are surrounded by light, and according to the greater or lesser velocity of the luminous waves, we shall of necessity discern now one colour and now another. And the objects thus seen by us will determine our thoughts; and in turn our volitions will depend upon these thoughts; and our characters will be shaped accordingly, and we shall be this or that man in conformity with the determination of circumstances. Man, according to this conception, will be the result of time, of place, of environment, of everything except of his own self.

But there is a higher point of view than the one I have just described, and to it we must rise, if we mean to understand our nature,—this marvellous human nature which was first disclosed to our consciousness at the advent of Christianity and in the course of time made more and more manifest, until it now loudly proclaims in us our human dignity exalted above the forces of nature, and is empowered by its cognitive faculty to dominate these forces, which must bend to man's purposes without ever blocking or obstructing his progress. Whosoever says: here is a body and there is a soul—two things, one outside of the other—such a man does not consider that these two things are two terms distinguished and differentiated by thought in the bosom of thought, that is to say, of the soul: of that soul which is truer than the other for the obvious reason that the latter thinks and therefore reveals its soul-nature by its own acts, whereas the former is the object of thinking, is a thing thought, and may therefore be a fallacious entity, an idolon, and a simple *ens rationis*, like so many other things that are thought and are subsequently found to have no kind of subsistence. In speaking of sensation and of motion which generates or somehow conditions sensation, we lose sight of the fact that sensation is truly enough a determination of consciousness, but in the same manner as the motion which is encountered in consciousness when the latter, in thinking, among other things thinks the displacement of objects in space.

For everything is within consciousness, and no way can be devised of issuing forth from it. We say that the brain is external to consciousness, and that the cranium encloses the brain, which in turn is enveloped by space luminous and airy, space filled with beautiful plants and beautiful animals; yet the fact remains that brain and skull and everything else are the potential or actual object of our thinking faculty, and cannot but remain therefore within that consciousness to which for a moment we supposed them to be external. We may start thinking, keeping in mind this indestructible substance of our thought; and as we proceed from this centre in which we have placed ourselves as subjects of thinking, and advance towards an ever-receding horizon, do we ever come in sight of the point where we must pause and say: "Here my thought ends; here something begins that is other than my thought"? Thought halts only before mystery. But even then it thinks it as mystery, and thinking it, transforms it, and then proceeds, and so never really stops.

Such being the true life of the spirit, rightly have we called it universal. At every throb it soars through the infinite, without ever encountering aught else than its own spiritual actualisations. In this life, such as we see it from the interior when we do not fantastically materialise it with our imaginations, the spirit is free because it is infinite.

Education then posits this liberty in the pupil, for it presupposes in him a susceptibility of development,—educability, as we may call it. The learner could not possibly be educable, that is, susceptible of receiving instruction, unless he were able to think. But thinking, we have already seen, signifies freedom. And not only is freedom presupposed by the educator, but it is the very thing he is aiming at in his work. As a result of his teaching, liberty must be developed in the same manner that the capacity for thinking and all modes of spiritual activity are developed. For the development of thought is a development of reflection, a constant increase of control over our own ideas, over the content of our consciousness, over our character, over our whole being in relation to every other being. And this growth of power is what we mean when we speak of the development of our freedom. It has been said, in fact, that education consists in liberating the individual from his instincts. Surely, education is the formation of man, and when we say man we mean liberty.

Here we stumble upon our antinomy. How are we to reconcile this presupposition and this aim of the educator with his interference in the personality of the pupil? This interposition surely signifies that the disciple must not be left to himself and to his own resources; that he has to clash with something or somebody that is not his own personality. Education implies a dualism of terms, the teacher and the learner; and it is this dualism which destroys the freedom, which sets a limit, and therefore annihilates infinity in which freedom consists. The disciple who encounters a stronger mastering will, an intellect equipped with a multitude of ideas, with an experience which forestalls his own powers of observation, and his innate zeal for investigation, sees in this more potent personality either a barrier obstructing his progress towards a goal which he spontaneously would attain; or else a goad which hurries him along the way which he would have indeed chosen of his own accord, but along which he would have liked to advance freely, calmly, joyously, as our Vittorino da Feltre would have it, and without any unwelcome compulsion. This pupil then would want to be left alone in order that he might be free, as free as God when as yet the world was not and he created it out of nothing by his joyous *fiat*, symbol of the loftiest spiritual liberty.

For these reasons we have come to believe that the most serious problem of education is the agreement between the liberty of the pupil and the authority of the teacher. Therefore great masters who meditated on the subject of education, from Rousseau to Tolstoi, have exalted the rights of liberty, but have fallen into the opposite extreme of denying the duty to authority, and have pursued in their abstractions a vague and unrealisable ideal of negative education.

But we must not cling to negatives. It should be our purpose to construct, not to destroy. The school, this glorious inheritance of human experiences, this ever-glowing hearth where the human spirit kindles and sublimates life as an object of constant criticism and of undying love, may be transformed, but cannot be destroyed. Let the school live, and let us cling to the teacher and maintain his authority, which limits the spontaneity and the liberty of the pupil. For this limitation is only apparent.

Apparent, however, when we deal with true education. For the school has for centuries been the victim of a grave injustice. People have been led to consider the classroom as a place of confinement and of punishment, and teachers have been cruelly lashed by the scourge of ridicule cracked in the face of pedantry. Through this injustice, the school has been burdened with faults that are not its own, and teachers, genuine educators, have been confused with the pedantic drillmasters that are the negation of intelligent education and of inspired ethical discipline. In order to see whether education really limits the free activity of the pupil, we must not consider abstractly any school, which may not be after all a school. We must examine an institution at the moment and in the act which realises its significance—when the instructor teaches and the pupils are learning. Such a moment should at least hypothetically be granted to exist.

Let us take a concrete example and consider a teacher in the act of giving lessons in Italian. Where is this something which I have called the Italian language? In the grammar, perchance? Or in the dictionary? Yes, partly. Provided grammar can invest its rules with the life of the individual examples that together constitute the expressive power of the living language; and provided the dictionary does not wither up all words in the arid abstraction of alphabetical classification; does not hang each of them by itself as limbs torn from the living body of the speech in which they had so often resounded and to which they will be joined again in the fulness of life and expressiveness; but does instead incorporate, as every good dictionary should, complete phrases, living utterances of great authors or perhaps of that nameless many-souled writer that somewhat confusedly is called the people.

But more than in the grammar and more than in the dictionary, the word is and exists in the writers themselves. The teacher should there point it out, as he guides his pupils through the authors who were able to express most powerfully our common thoughts. To his students who are striving to learn the language—that is the writers—he reads for example the poems of Leopardi. The poet's word, his soul hovers over the classroom, as the master reads. It penetrates into the minds of the pupils, hushes every other sentiment, removes every other thought, and throbs within them, stirs them, arouses them. It becomes one with the soul of each pupil, which speaks to itself a language of its own, using, truly enough, the words of Leopardi, but of a Leopardi who is peculiar to each of the listeners. Under this spell, the pupil who hears the poet's word echoing in the depths of his being, will he stop to reflect that this word is the echo of an echo? That he is under the influence of something repeated after a first utterance? Our own experience answers: No! But if any of the audience become absent-minded, if they should lose the rapt delight of poetical exaltation communicated to their soul by the teacher's voice, and should say that the word they hear is not their own but the master's, or rather, the poet's, then they would commit a serious blunder. For the word they intently listen to in their soul is their own, exclusively their own. Leopardi does not impart any poesy to him who, through his love, his study, and the intensity of his feelings, is unable to live his own poetry. And Leopardi (or the teacher who reads him) is not materially external to the enraptured listener; he is his own Leopardi, such as he has been able to create for himself. The master, as St. Augustine long ago warned us, is within us.

He is within us even if we see him in front of us, away from us seated in his chair. For in so far as he is a real teacher, he is ever the object of our consciousness, surrounded and uplifted in our spirit by the reverence of our feelings and by our trustful affection. He is *our* teacher, he is our very soul.

The dualism then is non-existent when we are educating. We do notice it before, and we are thus brought to examine the antinomy; but the difficulty is removed by the very act of education itself, by the first word that comes to the pupils' ears from the lips of the teacher. The dualism however cannot be resolved if the master's word fails to reach the pupils' soul, but then under those circumstances there is no education. But even in such cases, if the teacher is not sluggish, if he displays a real spiritual power, the abiding existence of the barrier between the two minds proves helpful to the spiritual growth of the learner, who, because of his incoercible freedom, is impelled by the insufficiency of the master to affirm his personality with increased vigour. So that the school is a hearth of liberty, even in spite of the intentions of the teacher. A school without freedom is a lifeless institution.

CHAPTER IV

REALISM AND IDEALISM IN THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

We found it necessary in the previous chapter to pass from the abstract to the concrete in order to arrive at the truth. The universality of the individual was made clear when for the empirical concept of the individual, abstractly considered, we substituted the deeper and more speculative one of the individual himself in the concreteness of his relationships. In like manner, the fundamental antinomy of education was resolved as soon as we replaced the abstract idea of the dualism of teacher and pupil, by the idea of their intrinsic, profound, unseverable unity as it gradually works out and is actualised in the process of education. We were enabled therefore to conclude that the real teacher is within the soul of the pupil, or, better still, the teacher is the pupil himself in the dynamism of his development. So that, far from limiting the autonomy of the disciple, the master, as the propulsive element of the pupil's spontaneity, penetrates his personality, not to suppress it, but to help its impulses and facilitate its infinite development.

The same method of resorting to the concrete now leads us to the determination of a third essential element in the process of education. We have spoken of the master, and we have spoken of the pupil,—of the latter as becoming actual as universal personality, of the former as becoming identical with this same personality. We must now take up the connecting link between the two, that is, culture. By culture we mean the content of education, the presupposed heirloom which in the course of time must pass from the teacher to the pupil. This spiritual content, in being apprehended, appears under different aspects: as erudition and information; as formation of personal capacities and training of spiritual activities; as art and science; as experience of life and as concept and ideal of existence; as simple cognition and as a norm of conduct. It includes everything that comes within the scope of teaching, and from whose value education derives its peculiar worth.

Culture, so defined, may be conceived of in two ways; and in as much as their differences are highly significant in the sphere of education as elsewhere, we must now somewhat carefully consider them.

These two ways correspond to two opposite conceptions of reality, and as such they pertain to philosophy. But men in general constantly have recourse to them, and so it happens that people frequently indulge in philosophic speculations without knowing it; and much philosophising goes on outside of the schools of the specialists, who are few compared to the great number of those who in their own way handle genuine concepts of philosophy.

Let us begin from the most obvious of these concepts, from the one which is fundamental and original to the human mind. Our whole life, if we consider the data of experience, seems to unfold itself on the substratum of a natural world, which therefore, far from depending on human life, represents the very condition of it. In order to live, to act, to produce, or in any way to exercise an influence on the external world, we must, first of all, be born. Our birth is the effect of a life which is not our life, which step by step rises and grows and spreads until it gathers all nature within itself. This nature existed before we were born, it will continue to be after we are all dead. Men draw their life from an organic and inorganic nature which had to exist in order that they might come into being. When nature will cease to provide these conditions, human life, according to this point of view, will come to an end; but nature, transformed, chilled, darkened, dead, will yet continue to be.

On this living trunk of nature our own life is grafted; animals come into existence, and among animals the human species. Each of us, as he comes into the world, finds this nature, developed, abundant, diversified in millions of forms, traversed by innumerable forces, organised up to the most highly developed structures, man included. We find this nature, and we begin to study it. We examine its parts one by one, their complexity, and the difference of their functioning. For each one of them has its peculiar way of being and of acting; it has its "laws." The aggregate of these laws, mutually corresponding, and integrating one another, constitutes the natural world—reality—as it stands before us. With this external reality we strive to become acquainted; and in order that we may live in it we either adapt ourselves to it, or adapt its conditions to ourselves. In this reality too we acquire the knowledge of the needs of our organism and of the means by which they may be satisfied,—the ratio, so to speak, between natural desires and controlled resources.

We are also told that our organism is in constant change and hurries on to its destination, to our death, which we abhor as passionately as we cherish life, but which we accept because such is the law of human life, fatal and inexorable; for reality is what it is, and we must adapt ourselves to it.

But if reality appears as constituted before us, as therefore conditioning our existence, and as existing independently of us; if it is indifferent to reality whether we be in it or not; if we are truly extraneous to it, the conclusion must then be drawn that we, from the outside, presume to know reality and to move about it without being this reality itself or any part of it. For all reality is thought by us as a connected whole, though indeed vaguely; in its totality it is regarded as an object known to us, but existing in utter independence of this knowledge of ours. Its whole process is therefore complete in objective nature, which conditions our spiritual life, and this in turn can mirror reality but can never be a part of it.

This then is the primitive and fundamental concept that the human mind forms of reality. In consequence of it man feels that he is enclosed within himself: he knows he is producing the dreams and the fair images of art; that he can construct inwardly abstract geometrical figures and numbers; that he can generate ideas. But he also feels that between these ideal creations of his own, and the solid, sound, real living forms of nature, there is an abyss. He must, indeed, fall in with nature, in the process of generating other living beings of flesh and blood. He must avail himself of nature by first submitting to its unfailing laws, if he intends to give body, that is, real existence, to the ideal conceptions of his intelligence. On one side then we have thought; on the opposite side reality,—that reality, Nature.

This conception at a certain moment is transformed but not substantially changed. As we begin to reflect, we notice that this nature, as known to us, is not the real external nature, the nature which is unfolded in time and space, which we see before our eyes, an object perceptible by our bodily senses. We conclude then, that nature as known to us is an *idea;* that Nature is one thing and the idea of nature another. And if we think this perceptible nature and have faith in its reality and in the reality of its determinations, this nature in which reality is made to consist is the nature which is within our thought,—the idea of nature; or in other words, thought considered as the content of our mind. This thought is the aim of all the inquiries by which we strive to become thoroughly acquainted with nature, and which we finally discover or at least ought to discover when we succeed in attaining true knowledge. We say that we know nature only when we are able to recognise an idea in nature: that is, an idea in each of its elements, and a system of ideas in the whole of nature. So that what we know is not really nature as it presents itself to our senses, still less nature as it is, before it has impressed our senses; but nature as disclosed to us by thought, as it exists in thought—i. e., the idea. And this idea must be real, otherwise nature, which has its truth in the idea, could not be real. Not only is it real, it is that reality itself which a moment ago we were led to think of as consisting in external perceptible nature.

This reality makes the life of our thought possible, but it is not a product of this life. It is a condition and a prerequisite of thought, and as such it does not exist because we think it: but rather we are able to think it because it exists. It is eternal truth, at first unknown to man, then by him desired. In quest of it he gradually lifts on all sides the veil which hides it from his eyes, without however hoping that it will ever entirely disclose to him its divine countenance.

According to this transformed point of view, then, reality, which in the first instance appeared to be natural, that is physical or material, has now become ideal. But even thus it remains extraneous to thought, and unconcerned with the presence or the absence of it; transcending the entire life of the human spirit, and incessantly subject to the danger of error. Whereas the idea as a complexus of all ideas that can be thought (but have not been thought, or rather have not all been thought) is the beacon of light that guides the way of man in the ocean of life; it is Truth pure and perfect.

This idea evidently must not be confused with the purely subjective ideas which we spoke of above, and which as such are extraneous to reality. This idea is reality itself idealised. It is to this idea, for instance, that we all appeal when we affirm the existence of a justice superior to that of which man is capable, of a justice in behalf of which man is in duty bound to sacrifice his private interests, and even his life. This idea we have in mind when we speak of a sacred and inviolable right, whereas in daily practice there is perhaps no right which is not more or less trampled upon. This idea is before us when we consider truth in general: truth which is indeed real, even though it may not be seen or felt, much more real than physical nature, for nature comes to life and dies and constantly changes, while truth is motionless, impassible, eternal. In its bosom then we must try to find everything that we want to accept as not illusory.

But in substituting the conception of an ideal reality for the conception of a material one, reality as a whole continues to be something contradistinguished from us, an object indeed of our thoughts, but one which cannot be conceived as it is in itself except by abstracting it from our own thought.

We, then, who open our eager eyes in the endeavour to discover, to know, to orient ourselves, to live in the midst of a known and familiar world; we, thinking beings, and not simply things of nature, beings who as such affirm our personality in the very act of saying *We,* we then are of less account than the earthworms which crawl along until they die unknown to the foot that crushes them. We are nothing because we do not belong to reality; we deceive ourselves into believing that we are doing something on our own account, but in truth we renounce every desire of doing or creating something original, something we might really call ours; and we abandon ourselves, we drift away confused with external reality and submerged under the irresistible current of its laws.

This conception of life, which I have given only in its barest outline, is a very common one. For thousands of years it has persisted in the philosophical field, the nourishment and the torment of the greatest intellects of humanity. But humanity could not rest satisfied with a world conceived in such a manner; with a world which, whether we call it nature or idea, is at bottom always nature. For by nature we understand not only that reality which is in space and time, but also every reality which is not the product of our will, nor the result in general of that spiritual activity, which in a manner peculiar to all human acts reveals a diversity of values, extending from the sublimity of heroism and of genius to the lowest depths of cowardice and to the gloom of sloth. Nor can it be considered as the product or result of a process; for it is immediate reality, original and immutable. In a world which is Nature, man is an intruder, a stranger without rights, without even real existence. As a being, he is destined to be suppressed; nay, he does not even exist. And his life, with all his aspirations, his needs, his claims, is but a fallacious illusion which will sooner or later collapse. Man cannot help succumbing in a world where there is no place for him. Therefore a more or less cloudy gust of pessimism lowers over the consciousness that has stopped at this conception of reality. Leopardi is the most eloquent expression of the intense misery to which man is condemned in such circumstances, or to which rather he condemns himself. He condemns himself because he has it in his power to conceive reality otherwise. For let him ponder seriously and he will succeed in convincing himself that the naturalistic conception of reality is absurd. Philosophy has so demonstrated this truth, that he who now strives eagerly to attain a moral point of view in harmony with established principles can no longer repeat that note of pessimism, can no longer assert that the world is nature, or that it is the eternal idea from which nature is derived and by which it is made intelligible. Such views are no longer tenable.

The teacher who, because of his lofty mission, claims the right of forming souls, of arousing those powerful moral energies which alone empower man to live as a human being, may not, must not be ignorant of the fact that the contention of naturalism, which makes of the world an abstract reality, presupposed by the human spirit and therefore anterior and indifferent to it, is a belief that has been superseded and surpassed by modern thought. The teacher too can easily grasp this view, for in gathering all the arguments by which, along different lines, the new conception of reality has been attained, we find that the whole matter reduces itself to a simple and very easy reflection. Very easy in itself, though it may seem difficult to the greater part of us,—to the superficial thinkers, to the absent-minded, to those who lack the strength necessary to face the great responsibility imposed upon us by the truth which is derived from this reflection.

For naturalism reduces itself to the affirmation that we think nature, but do not ourselves exist; nature alone exists. We do not exist and yet we think, and we think of nature as existing. We do not exist and yet nature exists, of whose existence we have no other testimony than our thoughts. And if thought is a shadow, what will reality then be? The "dream of a shadow," in the words of the Greek poet. Is it possible for us to stop at this conclusion? Is it possible for an inexistent thing to vouch for the existence of something which we know only from its attestations? Such is the absurd position we are forced into when we assume that Thought, in equipoise with reality, remains outside of it and leaves it out of its own self.

We give the name of realism to that manner of thinking which makes all reality consist in an external existence, abstract and separate from thought, and makes real knowledge consist in the conforming of our ideas to external things. By idealism on the other hand we mean that higher point of view from which we discover the impossibility of conceiving a reality which is not the reality of thought itself. For it reality is not the idea as a mere object of the mind, which therefore can exist outside of the mind, and must exist there in order that the mind may eventually have the means of thinking it. Reality is this very thought itself by which we think all things, and which surely must be something if by means of it we want somehow to affirm any reality whatsoever, and must be a real activity if, in the act of thinking, it will not entangle itself in the enchanted web of dreams, but will instead give us the life of the real world. If it is not conceivable that such activity could ever go forth from itself and penetrate the presumably existent world of matter, then it means that it has no need of issuing from itself, in order to come in contact with real existence; it means that the reality which we call material and assume to be external to thought is in some way illusory; and that the true reality is that which is being realised by the activity of thought itself. For there is no way of thinking any reality except by setting thought as the basis of it.

This is the conception, or, if you will, the faith, not only of modern philosophy, but of consciousness itself in general, of that consciousness which was gradually formed and moulded under the influence of the deeply moral sentiment of life fostered by Christianity. For it was Christ that first opposed to nature and to the flesh a truer reality,—not the world in which man is born, but that world to which he must uplift himself: that world in which he has to live, not because it is anterior to him, but because he must create it by his will: and this world is the kingdom of the spirit.

In accordance with this conception there is, properly speaking, no reality: there is a spirit which creates reality, which therefore is self-made and not the product of nature. The realist speaks of external existence, of a world into which man is admitted and to which he must adapt himself. But the idealist knows only what the spirit does, what man acts. A nature, ever at work in the progress of the spirit, throbs in the soul of man, who with his intellect and his will re-creates it by its restless, unceasing motion. It is a world which is never created, because the entire past flows and becomes actual in that form which is peculiar to it and in which it exists, namely, the present,—history in the incessant rhythm of its becoming, in the ever-living act of self-production.

On what side of the controversy should the teacher stand who means to absorb into his soul the life of the school? Will he with the realists believe in a reality which must be observed and verified? Or will he as an idealist trust that the only world is the one which is to be constructed by him; that in all this task he can rely only on the creative activity of the spirit that moves within us, ever unsatisfied with what is, incessantly aspiring for what does not yet exist, for what must come to be as being the only thing which deserves to exist and to fulfil life?

There are then these two ways of conceiving culture, the realistic and the idealistic. By the former we are led to imagine that man's spirit is empty, and that no nourishment can come to it except from the outside world, from those external elements which he can acquire because they exist prior to the activity by which he assimilates them. The latter, admitting only what is derived from the developing life of the spirit, can conceive of culture solely as an immanent product of this very life, and separable from it only by abstraction.

It is evident that the ordinarily accepted view of educators to-day is realistic rather than otherwise. The ideal and therefore the historical origin of the school itself is intimately connected with the realistic presupposition. For the school begins when man for the first time becomes aware of the existence of a store of accumulated culture which should be protected from dispersion. Grammar, for instance, exists before the notion of teaching it arises. Men already possess a language when they make up their minds to teach it to their children. Self-taught and inventive genius, by new observation and discoveries, gives rise to new disciplines; and men, discovering the value of such disciplines, determine to institute a school where they may be cultivated and handed down to the coming generations. In general then, first comes knowledge; then the school as a depository of it. It may be granted that the progress of learning is made possible or at least accentuated by educational institutions; but the fact remains that the school is founded on pre-existing knowledge. Science, arts, customs must exist before they can be taught to others, and they do exist, but not in the spirit of the one who is to acquire them, who must appropriate them as they are in themselves. The *Iliad* exists: Homer sang: the poems attributed to him were collected into an epic from which we learn of the beliefs, of the aspirations, and of the memories that were dear to the ancient Greeks, and every cultivated person to-day must derive from them his own spiritual substance. The teacher shows to his pupils how best to read, how to understand that epic which is a treasure of the past bequeathed not only to the modern Greeks but to humanity in general. For we all profit from this inherited spiritual wealth in the same manner that every man that comes into the world enjoys the light and the heat of the sun which he surely did not kindle in heaven.

The fact that culture, as the subject matter of education, exists before the exercise of that spiritual activity which can be educated only through its means, seems to the realist a condition without which the school cannot arise. Only as culture develops and spreads does the school grow and expand; and, in the progress of civilisation, as culture becomes specialised, the school is correspondingly differentiated into institutions of ever-growing specialisation. For the school can but follow and reflect the advance of science, of letters, of art,—

of humanity in general in all its strives to perpetuate.

All this evidently can be maintained only from the point of view of the realist. For him the school is concerned not with those that already know and therefore have no need of it, but for those who are still ignorant. For them it is instituted; it ministers to their needs, and is therefore adjusted in the direction in which it believes their spirit should be oriented. In the school of physicians, there is not medicine but the learning of it, for if the art of healing were already mastered as it seems to be in the case of the professors, there would be no need of a medical school. There is indeed the professor in the lecture room; but he is there only for the learners, and his rôle has no meaning except in relation to their needs. He is the possessor of science, and as such he teaches and does not learn. The school then is not the possession of culture, but the development of a spiritual life aspiring to this possession;. and this aspiration is possible because of the existence of the teacher who has already mastered it, who possesses it, not as his own property, but as social wealth entrusted to him for the use of everybody. He himself is only an instrument of communication. Culture antedates him; it does so even when he is the author of it. For it is not possible for him to impart it to others until he has first elaborated it himself, and not until the merits of his contributions have been in part at least recognised by the world.

The school to the realist presupposes the library. The teacher needs books, plenty of books in order to increase his knowledge and thus become better acquainted with that world through which he has to pilot his pupils. In the books, then, in the long shelves, culture lives: in the innumerable volumes that no one ever hopes to read; in the shelves which contain a world of beautiful things, and so valuable that man, as Horace says, should spend sleepless nights in order to acquire them, should endure cold and heat, fatigue and sacrifice. For humanity, we are told, lives in those volumes to which the teacher must somehow link himself if he intends to advance properly, to live the life which our forefathers have generously endowed for us, and to protect our spiritual inheritance from dispersion. In this atmosphere he must live; he must plunge in that spiritual sea which rolls limitless across the centuries. The pupil looks out upon this ocean which allures every man who is born to the life of culture. At first he clings to the shore, dreads the water, and asks to be helped until he has at least become familiar with the element. Who will encourage the beginner to leave the dry land and plunge into the deep where he would meet sure destruction? He must first be trained in some sheltered cove, where protected from the violence of the tumultuous surf, from the might of the indivisible mass of the ocean, he may gradually learn the ways of the deep.

The student must accordingly begin with a definite book; he must be saved from the haunting power of the library, which draws the youthful mind towards every volume, towards every subject. In the multitude of books, not all of them read, not all of them readable, thought founders, sees nothing, thinks nothing, is unable to rest in any of the things which he imagines exist in the vast library shelves. He must choose. Let him select, say, Dante. He reads the *Divine Comedy,* the poem written by that great Italian who has been dead these six centuries and now rests at Ravenna, no longer mindful of his Francesca, of his magnanimous Farinata, of his kindly master Brunetto, or of Beatrice. Dante created his miraculous world, he breathed life into his characters, wrote the last line of his last canto, smiled in rapture at the divine beauty of his creation, now complete and perfect, and died. His manuscript was copied thousands of times; and after the discovery of printing, millions of copies were made. In one of these we now are able to find it, this divine poem, just as it was written,—for we want it exactly as it flowed from his pen without the change of a letter, without the omission of a comma. And this volume is an example of what exists in a library,—of the culture that teachers strive to find there, and thence communicate to their pupils!—something that belongs to the world, something which is a part of reality, which men therefore can grasp, if they want to, just as they can get to know the stars and the plants, and all things of nature. The *Divine Comedy* can be realistically conceived in respect to us who open the volume and prepare to read it, for the reason that it already exists and arouses our desire. If we had left it on the shelf where it was resting, it would have had exactly the same existence. What we find in the volume, as we read of that land of the dead which is much more living than all the living beings who surround us in our daily life, would all of it have been in that book, would have continued to be there, even if we had never opened it.

But is it really so? If we reflect a while we shall see that this is not the case. The book contains exactly what we find there, what we are capable of finding there, nothing more, nothing less. Different persons discover in it different things, but it is nevertheless obvious that for each individual the book contains only what he finds in it; and in order to be able to say that the book contains more than what a given reader discovers in it, it is necessary that some other person should find that something more; and that the text contains this additional beauty is only true for him who discovered it and for those who seek it after him.

Dante waited for centuries for De Sanctis[1] to appear and to disclose the meaning of Francesca's words.

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[1] Francesco de Sanctis, a great Italian critic, whose "History of Italian Literature" is still unfortunately inaccessible in English.

Therefore it has been said that to understand Dante is a sign of greatness. Abstractly considered, of course, the poet is what he is, but only in the abstract. In the concrete, Dante is the author whom we admire and appreciate proportionately to our power. For as we read the poem in accordance with our training, and the development of our personality, Dante is grafted on a trunk which did not exist before us, which, on the contrary, is our very life; and before this life is realised, evidently none of those things can be found there which actually come into being in the process of its realisation. So that if we had not read the book, far from its being true that everything we found in it would still continue to be there, nothing would remain of what we find in it, absolutely nothing.

We have said nothing of "what *we* find." But if we consider the matter we shall see that what we find is everything; everything for me; everything for everybody. Only that can come out of a book which the reader with his soul and with his labours is capable of getting out of it; and in consequence of these labours and in virtue of his soul he is able to say that a certain book has a content. In fact, to return to our example, the *Divine Comedy* which we know, the only one which we can know, the only one which exists, is the one which lives in our souls, and which is a function of the criticism that interprets it, understands it, and appreciates it. That *Divine Comedy* therefore did not close the circle of its life on the day when Dante wrote the last line of the last canto; it continued to live, still continues to exist in the history, in the life of the spirit. Its life never draws to a close. The poem is never finished.

This is true of the poem of Dante; it is true of everything which we conceive of as inherited from our great predecessors, from those who built up the patrimony of human culture. Culture then is not before us, a treasure ready to be excavated from the depths of the earth, awaiting to be revealed to us. Culture is what we ourselves are making; it is the life of our spirit.

Abstract culture, on the contrary, is merely as realistically conceived. It slumbers in the libraries, in the sepulchres of those who lived, who passed away and created it once for all. It belongs to the past, to the things that have died. But the past, if we really mean to grasp it, if we want to see it close by as something that is and not merely as an abstraction, the past itself, becoming the present, made into that actuality which we call living memory, is history,—history constructed by us, meditated by us, re-created by us, in accordance with our abilities;—and with our powers of evocation we awaken the past from its slumber and breathe into it the life of the spiritual interests, of the ideas, of the sentiments that are, after all, the living substance in which the past really survives, in which it is real. In the same way the only culture that can be bestowed upon the spirit, the only one that admits of being concretely taught and learned, the only one that can be sought, because it is the only one that really exists, is idealistic culture. It is not in books, nor in the brains of others. It exists in our own souls as it is gradually being formed there. It cannot therefore be an antecedent to the activity of the spirit, since it consists in this very activity.

This must be the faith of all those who cannot bring themselves to believe that they are strangers in this world, and that they have come here to exercise a function which is not their own. For the world in general, and the sphere of culture in particular, is not completed when we arrive upon the scene. This is why human life has a value, why education is a mission.

CHAPTER V

THE SPIRITUALITY OF CULTURE

THE idealistic conception of culture enables us to get an initial understanding of the spirituality of the school. This spirituality is surely felt by all those who live within the class-room; but it should be understood in the most rigorous and absolute manner by those who wish to have a deeper consciousness of the extreme delicacy of the tasks performed and the words uttered by those who enter it with the sincere heart and the pure soul of the teacher.

The school is obviously not the hall which contains the teacher and the pupils. These may have a hall, may even have the teacher, without yet possessing the school, which consists in the communication of culture. This culture, we have seen, is not really pre-existent to the act which communicates it; it is not to be found in books, not to be looked for in an ideal transcendent world, not to be demanded of the teacher. It is only in the spirit of the person who is in the act of learning. It is there in the manner in which it is possible for it to be there, not comparable to any presumed form of pre-existing culture. The school gains its existence entirely in the soul of the learner.

Knowledge is not to be found beyond the bounds of the human spirit. I insist on this conception because I am well aware that the minds of many rebel against this conclusion, no matter how irrefutable its grounds may be. For they ask: what then is the learning which we ascribe to the master minds of humanity, now indeed dead but still active in their works? They also ask how we are able to think and account for that learning which we feel we are not originating, which we know we are re-acquiring for ourselves after it has many times been in the domain of others.

Can we really consider as non-existent what we as yet do not know, may perhaps never know, but which is none the less capable of being known? When we are filled with reverence for the glory of men whose learning surpasses our powers, are we the victims of an illusion? Are we prevailed upon by ignorance and lack of reflection? And how then can we justify the cult which every civilised man consecrates to the mighty spirits—philosophers, poets, artists, and heroes—who added so much to the moral fund of humanity? Was there not a Dante six centuries back, who composed a lofty poem, which was admired by everybody, at a time when we, who now read it and bring it to life in our souls, were still so far removed from the entrance of this life?

The answer to all these questions is very simple, so simple that we must be careful lest we miss its significance. All this lore of the past which we strive to preserve surely does exist; it does contain all the names which are sacred to the memory of humankind. The *Divine Comedy* has been written and no longer awaits its Dante. But this lore of the past, as we for brevity's sake call it, is nothing else than what *we think* as such. History, as it unfolds itself from century to century, is never compressed within a past which because of its completeness might be made to exist beyond the present and in opposition to it; but it exists in a past which is in the present as a plant that grows or an animal that lives, never adding anything new to the old, always transforming the old into the new; at no time, therefore, having anything but what is new, never being anything else but the new. In history, thus comprehended, we to-day are but one person with the men who thought before us, with the poets, the philosophers, the spiritual creators of the past. With them we are a person that grows and develops, ever acquiring, never losing; a single being that apprehends and recalls and constantly makes all his past bear fruit in the present. Our childhood has not completely passed away into nothing: it keeps returning to the ever-busy phantasy that tenderly fondles it, cherishes it, idealises it into poetry. If we consider this childhood as something that once was, that existed in utter ignorance of this poetry that was yet to be written, that could not then be written, surely this infancy is quite dead; we should rather say that it never existed. But it does live as the childhood which is a recollection, which arouses feelings, and such feelings as are at a given moment the actual sentiment of the adult. Once in the years long gone by a kindly word reached the depths of my soul. We all have heard in the years long gone by some such kindly words that in the mystery of our childish mind appeared as a revelation. Such words as fall from the lips of a mother and inspired by her tender affection have the secret power of appeasing us in a moment of rage, and of making us feel the gentle sweetness of that goodness which is made of love. We may since have forgotten that word, and the circumstances in which it was uttered: but it is none the less true that on that day our soul was modified and became endowed almost with a sixth sense. This sense has enabled us subsequently to perceive so many things that are beautiful in life, and it in turn grew stronger because of frequent use and increasing exercise, until it finally became the most potent organ of our moral personality. Here too our development has been a constant acquiring with no losing: a preserving of the past by which it was converted into the present, and therefore annulled as past pure and simple.

Such is the moral development of man, who believes himself an individual, but is in truth humanity considered momentarily in one of its fragments. Such is history: the unfolding of the spirit in its universality. It is not therefore difficult to determine what is the past culture in which we desire to graft our present one. It is our own actual culture in so far as it is not the patrimony, not the spiritual life of the isolated individual, of a particular being; but is instead the life of the spirit in its universality, the development of the human personality taken in its effective, historical concreteness.

The past with its entire content is a projection of our actual consciousness, i. e., of the present. But we must not give this proposition a sceptical sense. As I have already pointed out, the present neither in the particular individual nor in the universal history of the spirit, is sundered from the past by that abyss which is ordinarily seen from a materialistic point of view. The past is one and the same thing with the present. The past *is* the present in its inmost substance; and the present is the past that has matured. The grain of wheat which was buried in the furrow is now no longer to be found under the glebe. It lives, multiplied in the ear of wheat. The seed as such was decomposed and destroyed in the soil; it is there no more, it sprung thence as a blade of grass, it grew, was transformed, still is, still lasts, and will continue to endure in other forms. Where is it now? Why, in whatever form it may now have assumed. It is the past in the present, as the present.

So then, what is Dante the poet who towers over the centuries, the object of our admiration, the master of all who speak and use the Italian language? He is the lordly poet of the fourteenth century, not because he then lived his own individual life, but because he survives to-day in us who think him, who appreciate him even when we are not fully acquainted with him. In this sense he lives in us, as the seed does in the ear of corn.

I have just hinted at the possibility of appreciating something without fully understanding it. I wanted to make clear how impossible it is to separate, with a clean cut, knowledge from ignorance. It is far from true that before taking up a certain science we know absolutely nothing about it,—that the boy who goes to school for the first time is completely devoid of all knowledge, or that he who is in quest of a book which he has never read can in no way whatever speak about it.

For fair renown begets love for the unseen person, as the poet reminds us and as experience often teaches. Frequently we know of the existence and the beauty of a woman whom we have never seen, but who is not therefore completely unknown to us. So also many of us desired to go to school long before we had seen the inside of a classroom. What is dearer than the joy foretasted at the first imaginings of school? We look forward to that new life upon which we are about to enter in the company of our bigger brothers and of our older playmates. They have told us so many things about it. From their accounts and from the fond memories of our parents we already know the school before we approach it, and its pleasing aspects invite us into the classroom.

For the same reason we search for books we have never seen, and we are drawn towards new studies and pursuits. There is no leaping from ignorance to knowledge, as from pitch darkness to noon-tide brilliancy. The transition is imperceptible, as when the dim morning twilight merges into the first glimmerings of dawn, which in turn fade away under the dazzling flashes of sunrise. And even from the midst of darkness we yearn for a world which though unseen is somehow present to our consciousness, already illumined by our thought, warmed by our sentiments. Or, in other words, the culture which we do not yet possess, and which we expect to get at school, is already implanted in our mind, where it will sprout and grow and bear fruit, fused and confused with the life of our spirit.

Having now reached this point, can we define culture? I am inclined for a moment to assume the rôle of Don Ferrante in Manzoni's novel.[1] By pedantic ratiocinations he proved that the plague could not be a contagious disease: "for," he said, "in nature everything is either a substance or an accident." Contagion, he then went on to prove, could neither be the one nor the other; therefore the plague was but an influx of the stars, and there could be no use in taking precautions;

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[1] *I Promessi Sposi* ("The Betrothed").

and having proved this, he fell a victim to the epidemic, and died cursing the stars like an operatic hero. Let us follow for a moment in the footsteps of this pedant, whose method, ridiculous as it may seem, has had nevertheless a glorious history, and one which Manzoni himself admired.

I say: We can think only and we do think only two kinds of reality,—person or thing. Every one of us is naturally drawn to this distinction; and when we have formulated it, we feel more or less vaguely, more or less clearly, that every possibility is comprised within these two terms, that outside of them it is impossible to think any reality whatsoever. The reason is this: if we think, if we act, if we live, we inevitably place ourselves in a situation such that we on one side are as centre, as beginning, or as subject of our activity; and on the other side are the objects toward which our activity is directed and by which it is terminated. *We* therefore as subject of the entire surrounding world; and *this world* as the end of our thoughts and of our scientific inquiries, end of our desires and of our practical activity; the world which is represented in our consciousness, and which we strive to dominate by our labours, and our reason. Can there be anything else beside *us* and what *we* think?

The world which we think and which we oppose to ourselves seems at first to contain different kinds of objects. There seem to be both persons and things;

simple objects of cognition which we ordinarily call *things* which can never become subjects; and persons who at first are represented to us as objects of our knowing, of our love, and of our hatred, as ends of our activity; but who under a closer scrutiny are transformed before our eyes into knowing and acting subjects, who, in other words, become just exactly what we are. But when we really get to know these beings that surround us as subjects on an equal basis, then we cease to consider them as objects of our cognition, and as solely endowed with that material objectivity which at first put them in the same category with the inanimate things, with plants and animals. We then find them close to us, very close: fused with our own spiritual substance. We feel them to be our fellow men, our kinsmen, with whom we constitute that person of whose existence I am aware every time I say *We:* the person we must take into account whenever we wish to affirm our personality in a concrete manner, the only person, the one subject, the true subject of human knowledge and of human activity. The subject which knows and acts as a universal in the interests of all men, or rather in behalf of the *one man* in whom all single individuals are united and with whom they are all identified.

Then if we give a rigorous and exact meaning to the expressions, "We and what is before us," "We and the objects," "We and the World," we have a correct classification of all thinkable reality differentiated into persons and things, but with the understanding that all persons are in reality one Person.

One *person*, and things innumerable! As we look about us, we find the horizon peopled with thousands and millions and infinite quantities of objects, which may one by one attract our attention, and may be gathered up in the vast, unbounded picture surveyed by the eye as it moves on from thing to thing, incessantly, without ever reaching the last. The world which we first discover is the world of matter, of things which strike our senses. This world rushes impetuously into our mind at the beginning of our natural experience. And these material objects are many not only *de facto* but also *de jure*. They must be, they cannot but be many if we are to consider them as material things. It is their peculiar nature, it is their very essence to be an indefinite multitude.

A material thing means a thing occupying space. And space is made up of elements, each one of which excludes all the others and is therefore conceived independently of the others, must so be conceived. For it is the very nature of space to be divisible. When it is narrowed down to a point and cannot be further subdivided, then it ceases to be space. Its divisibility signifies that space is nothing more than the sum of its parts; that it contains nothing in addition to these parts; that it therefore resolves itself into them without at all losing its being and without any of the parts being deprived of anything which was theirs in the whole. In fact, if anything were lost of the entire whole, this loss could not but be felt in each single part. A book, considered as a material thing, is composed of a certain number of printed leaves stitched together; and if the leaves fall apart, they may be brought together again so that they will compose the same book as before. An iron rod weighs the same before and after it has been broken up into parts.

Things cease to be exclusively and solely material when, though they may be divisible in a certain respect, they are nevertheless indivisible in another respect. Plants, animals, all living organisms, considered simply as objects occupying space and as therefore having certain dimensions, admit surely of being separated into parts. Trees are cut into logs, sawed into boards; animals are slaughtered and quartered. But considered from the point of view of its peculiar quality, of the essential property which distinguishes it from all other bodies, an organism is not divisible. If we do divide it, each component part ceases to be what it previously was when conjoined with the others. Such a part cannot be preserved; it withers, it decays, and is dispersed, so that the whole can never be reconstituted. The various parts of an organism, considered as such, are inseparable, because each of them is and maintains itself on the strength of its relations to the others, forming with them a true and essential unity. If we however try to find out what this unity is by which all the limbs are indissolubly held together, we shall discover nothing which can be observed and represented spatially, nothing endowed with dimensions, however small, after the manner of the several limbs which this unity fuses within itself and vivifies.

If unity which is the life-giving principle of every organism could be spatially represented, or in other words, if it were something material, it would be one of those very limbs that have to be unified, and could not then be the unifying principle itself. Hence the vanity of the efforts on the part of materialistic physiologists who obstinately strive to explain life by observing the parts which compose the organic mass, by studying the concurrence of their processes, their chemical relationships, and their mechanism. A material being, organically constituted, is something more than a material thing pure and simple: it announces already a higher principle; it presages the spirit.

But the things that we all agree to regard as spiritual defy absolutely every attempt at division. A poem may be considered in a certain way as material, and may accordingly be divided into various parts,—stanzas, lines, words. But it is clear that such a separation cannot have the value which we assign to the divisions of things material. For in their case every part can stand by itself, and is in no way deprived of its characteristic being; whereas every part of a poem, stanza, verse, word, calls out and responds to every other part; and if isolated from them, loses the meaning which it had in the context; or rather it loses every meaning, and consequently perishes. It is true that by conjectures we interpret even very small fragments of ancient poems. But we do so only in so far as we claim the possibility of restoring approximately the entire poem in which the given fragment may live, by which it may be restored to life. Likewise all the words lined up in dictionaries are as so many bleeding limbs of living discourses, to which they must somehow or other be ideally reconnected, if we are to understand what they really were and what functions they had. Multiplicity of parts in things of the spirit is only apparent: it must be reduced to indivisible unity, from which every element of the multiplicity derives its origin, its substance, and its life, so that we may give to it a real meaning and a foundation.

Nor is this the only unity possessed by the things that are assumed to be spiritual. We have already considered the unity whereby, for example, the words of a poem cannot be separated from the poem itself, in which each of them acquires a particular accent, a particular expression, and therefore a particular individuality. We shall now consider another unity. He who really perceives a poem is not confronted by an observable thing, compact if you will, unseverable and united, but none the less independent of human personality. Poetry is only understood when in the flowing unity of its verses and in the continuous rhythm of its words we grasp a sentiment in its development, a soul's throb in a moment of its life, a man, a personality. The poetry of Dante is very different from that of Petrarch, because each is the expression of a powerfully distinct personality. Any composition of these poets is understood and enjoyed only when we feel in it the personal accent which distinguishes one poetical personality from the other. A poet without individuality has no significance whatsoever, and therefore no existence as a poet. But the real artist leaves his imprint more or less markedly in all his productions, so that in every given instance, over and beyond the variety of the subject matter, we feel the living soul of the poet. A poem then is the poet; it is a person and not a thing. And the same can be said, as we can easily see, of all things that are commonly called spiritual.

But in addition to things material, it seems that there are immaterial ones which do not pertain as one's own to any particular person. The ideas of which we had occasion to speak before,—immaterial entities, not perceptible by the senses, but thinkable by the intellect, and which severally correspond to all sorts or species of the various material things,—were once conceived as things by philosophers, and they are still so conceived to-day by the majority of men. It is not requisite that one actually think them; it is sufficient that they be in themselves thinkable. As a matter of fact, they may or may not be thought, no differently therefore from any of the material objects which are not created by our senses, but must already exist in order that our senses may perceive them. These ideas are many, in a manner corresponding to the material objects; and they are all different. They mirror, so to speak, the multiplicity of material things in whose semblance and likeness they were devised. There are horses in nature, and there is the idea of the horse by which we are able to recognise all the animals that belong to that species. There are dogs, and there is the dog which we rediscover in every one of them. And there are flowers and the flower; and pinks, roses, and lilies, as well as the pink, the rose, and the lily; and likewise iron, copper, silver, gold, lime, water, and so on, to infinity. It is impossible to set a limit to ideas, because it is not possible ever to stop dividing, distinguishing, subdividing that nature which unfolds itself throughout space.

This boundless multitude of ideas, through which our mind can rove, surely has no spatial extension. But because of the necessity of conceiving any multitude as existing in some kind of space, it was thought proper to posit an ideal space in addition to the physical one. In other words, metaphorical dimensions were added to dimensions properly so called. But whether spatially or not, we strive to conceive ideas as many, each one of them existing by itself, and susceptible of being thought independently of the others. In reality however we never succeed in thinking them except as bound together and forming a system, in such a way that no single one of them can be thought except by thinking the others with it. Take man as an instance: each one of us has intuitively the idea of man, but this idea is not possessed like a word of which we may not even know the meaning. In thinking the idea we must think something which is its content. If we know what man is, we must be able to attribute a content to the idea of man. We may say, as the ancients did, that man is the laughing animal, or the speaking animal, because he is the only animal capable of expressing the emotions of his soul by laughter or by the inflection of his voice; because, in other words, he is the only animal who is conscious of what goes on within him. Or perhaps we might say that man is the reasoning animal, and we think this idea when we have thought the idea of *animal* and the idea of *reason*. But can the idea of animal be thought by itself alone? It, as well as the idea of reason, must have a content; that is, each must be connected with other ideas, without which it would be deprived of all consistency.

And so the mind that begins to think one single idea is compelled, almost dragged, to pass on to another, then to a third, and so on indefinitely. It finds itself in the condition of the man who tried to grasp a single link of a chain, just one, and found that he could not have it except on condition of taking the whole chain. So it is with ideas. We may not be capable of encompassing all of them in one single thought; but whenever we try to fix any one of them in our mind, it presents itself to us as a knot in which many other ideas are interlaced, twisted, and entangled. They form an infinite chain, in which it is not possible to think the first link or the last one, because the beginning is welded to the end, and we turn and turn and never reach the last. Is not this the nature of the ideas as we see them, as they constitute the field from which we must harvest all our possible thoughts?

Ideas are not, therefore, a true multiplicity, because they are not things, either material or ideal, and because they do not occupy any space whatsoever. Our imagination may present them to us as so many lights of an ideal sky; but our intelligence warns us that they cannot be separated one from the other and placed side by side. As I have already said: when we think one, we think them all. Or in any event we should, if we had mastered all that there is to be known. So that to our thought ideas appear as constituting one unique whole, a unity, that something which we call science, truth, knowledge. They are not a multitude, for the simple reason that in multiplicity they would be unthinkable. Their connection with and participation in an absolute unity come from the fact that they are the object of thought, and are therefore submitted to its activity, whereby they are ordered, correlated, organised, unified. In order that we may say that one idea contains another, or many others, we must analyse this first idea and define it. This first idea must be distinguished from the others, and they likewise among themselves. It is not therefore sufficient to say that there are these ideas, motionless, inert, lifeless, as they necessarily would be if they existed *per se*, as objects of mere possible contemplation. There must also be some one to analyse them, define them, and distinguish them. It is not enough to have the material of thought, we need thought also to mould and fashion this material, turn it effectively into thought stuff, reduce it to something susceptible of being thought. Ideas as things would in no way be related among themselves. But they do have that relationship which is generated by thought as it thinks them. Thought generates this relationship not as a fixed one, as would be the case if it were inherent in the things themselves; but as a relationship which is being formed by degrees, and which is continuously changing and developing. No ideal, abiding science, existing only as the object of a vague phantasy, can therefore result from this relationship. It constitutes instead a science which is ever re-formed and is never formed; it gives to the ideas an ever renewed aspect: it matures them, elaborates them, perfects them, by concentrating on each one of them the constantly increasing light of the system into which it closely binds them.

Ideas, then, as we really think them, are not a minutely fractioned and scattered multiplicity. Nor are they a mass of concurrent elements. They are Thought as it becomes articulate, and gains distinctness by these many Limbs, by these ideas, which exist, all of them, in the process by which they are gradually formed, developed, and complicated, and arrayed in an order which is constantly being renewed and which is never definitely perfected.

There are not then many ideas; there is one Idea, which is Thought. Only in a metaphorical sense can we consider them as things; and, properly speaking, they are the human person itself as actualised in thought, which is busily occupied in the construction of knowledge. They are an indivisible unity, in which each idea is found collaborating with every other one so as to answer the questions which Thought constantly propounds. They are the human person, not the persons; for we have already concluded that only in an abstract sense is it possible to speak of many persons; concretely there is but one universal Person which is not multiplicable.

There are not, then, going back to our original division, persons and things, material and spiritual. At the most there is one person, Man, and there are the material things which constitute this nature, as it occupies space, and in which we too believe we have a place, in as much as we consider ourselves beings of nature. Nothing beyond this can be conceived: on one side a sole immultiplicable reality, on the other a manifold reality, indefinitely divisible.

Here we might perhaps stop considering the special interest that called forth this inquiry. For no one could possibly suppose for a moment that culture could be placed in the midst of material things rather than in the spiritual reality which is a person. However, since the intimate nature of this spiritual reality which we call culture is not yet clearly revealed, we must continue our investigations, and give more attention to this division which for a moment we thought might be final. I mean the division of the world into persons and things: the equipoise of spirit and matter.

Do we really *think* this matter as we say we do, and which we believe we are justified in opposing to the spirit, in as much as the spirit is unity or universality, and matter, in its entirety, in every one of its parts, in everything, is an indefinite multiplicity? Matter can in truth be thought only on condition that it be possible to think multiplicity, that pure multiplicity which is the characteristic quality of matter.

What then is the meaning of multiplicity? In absolute terms we call multiple that which consists of elements each one of which is quite independent of all the others, and absolutely devoid of any and every relationship with them. The materialist conceived the world as an aggregate of atoms, separated one from the other and having no reciprocal relevance of any sort whatsoever. In the world of pure quantity, which is the same as absolute multiplicity, mathematical science claims the knowledge of units indifferent to their nexus, and therefore susceptible of being united and separated, of being summed up and divided, without any alteration taking place within the individual unit itself. Numerical units are therefore pre-eminently irrelative.

But the concept itself of the multiplicity of irrelative elements is an absurd one. In order that we may conceive many unrelated elements we must, to start with, be able to conceive a couple of such elements. Let us take A and B, absolutely unrelated, and such that the concept of one will contain nothing of the other's, and will therefore exclude it from itself. If A did not so exclude B, something of B would be found in A, and we could no longer speak of the two elements as irrelative. Irrelativity means reciprocal exclusion, a capacity by which each term is opposed to the other, and prevents the other from having anything in common with it. Without this reciprocal action whereby each term turns to the other and excludes it from itself, establishing itself as a negation of it, there would be no irrelativity. But this action by which each term is referred to the other so as to deny it, what is it but a relationship? Every effort therefore tending to break up reality into parts completely repugnant amongst themselves, mutually excluding one another, and therefore reciprocally indifferent, results in the very opposite of what was intended, viz.: the relative in place of the irrelative, unity instead of multiplicity.

Neither duality nor multiplicity is conceivable without that unity whereby the two engender that whole in which the two units are connected, even though they mutually exclude one another: without that unity which fuses and unifies every multiplicity determined in a number, which correlates among themselves the units which constitute the number. We could strip multiplicity of all unity only by not thinking it. But then in the gloom of what is not thought, multiplicity truly enough would not be unity, but it would not even be multiplicity, because it could not be anything at all. Or, if we prefer, it would be absolutely unthinkable.

Thought then establishes relationships among the units of the multiple, and thus constitutes them as the units of the manifold, and as forming multiplicity. It adds and divides, composes and decomposes, and variously distributes, materialising and dematerialising, so to speak, the reality which it thinks. For it materialises the reality when it conceives it as manifold: but it can conceive it as such only by unifying it, and therefore by dematerialising it and reabsorbing it into its own spiritual substance.

Matter is a manifold reality, without unity. What it is we already have seen: a material reality, and as such divisible into parts, placed in the world in the midst of a congeneric multitude. Now, since pure multiplicity is not conceivable except on condition that we abstract from that relationship to which the reciprocal exclusiveness of manifold elements is reduced, it is evident that matter and things are abstract entities. Thought stops to consider them, and regards them as existent, only because it withdraws the attention from that part of itself which it contributes to the making of the object represented. Thought therefore prescinds from that unity which material things could not by themselves contain, but from which it is impossible to prescind absolutely unless we wish to be reduced to an absurd conception.

Objective things then, the world of matter itself which we are wont to oppose in equipoise to the person, are in truth not separable from it. For matter has its foundation in thought by which the personality is actualised. Things are what we in our own thought counterpose to ourselves who think them. Outside of our thought they are absolutely nothing. Their material hardness itself has to be lent to them by us, for it ultimately is to be resolved into multiplicity, and multiplicity implies spiritual unity.

This then is the world: an infinity of things all of which have however their root in us. Not in "us" as we are represented ordinarily in the midst of things; not in the empirical and abstract "us" which feeds the vanity of the empty-headed egoist, of him who has not the faintest notion of what he really is, who can therefore think of himself only as enclosed within the tight husk of his own flesh and of his particular passions. No! they are rooted in that true "us" by which we think, and agree in one same thought, while thinking all things, including ourselves as opposed to things. And he who fails to reach this profound source, this root from which all reality receives its vitalising sap, may indeed get a blurred glimpse of a blind, inert, material mechanism, but he cannot even fix and determine this mechanism. He cannot upon further reflection stop at the conviction that it is in truth, as it appears in semblance, something real, for it reveals itself to him as so absurd as to become unthinkable. The world then is in us; it is our world, and it lives in the spirit. It lives the very life of that person which we strive to realise, sometimes satisfied with our work, but oftener unsatisfied and restless. And there is the life of culture.

It is not possible to conceive knowledge otherwise than as living knowledge, and as the extolment of our own personality. This is our conclusion. We shall, later on, derive from it two corollaries that are very important for teachers, in as much as they bear directly on the problems of education.

CHAPTER VI

THE ATTRIBUTES OF CULTURE

FROM the concept of the spirituality of culture, we derive all the fundamental propositions of pedagogy. But in as much as this conception of culture coincides with that of personality, or of the spirit, it is evident that all the fundamental propositions of the philosophy of the spirit are also derived from it. In fact, we separate pedagogy from the philosophy of the spirit only because of didactic convenience. To determine, then, the attributes of culture, by which education becomes actual, we have but to consider the nature of the spirit and endeavour to define its attributes. This way we must follow if we are ever to acquire a thorough comprehension of the principles of the several theories of education, principles which are but the laws immanent to the life of education itself in its effective development.

The assertion that "culture is the human spirit" means nothing unless we first define this spirit and understand its attributes. We cannot possess a concept which is not determined; and the determinations of a concept are the constituent attributes of the reality which we strive to conceive, and which is not thinkable if deprived of any of these attributes. The following example, appropriate even though trite, will make my meaning clearer. Physical bodies cannot be conceived without also conceiving gravity. Gravity is then an attribute of the physical body, and as such it determines the concept of it. In the same way, to conceive the spirit is to embrace with thought the concepts which are absolutely inseparable from the concept of the spirit.

This inquiry into the nature of the attributes of culture, though it constantly progresses towards a satisfactory solution, yet seems at times to be losing ground on account of the ever-increasing difficulties that beset its advance. It is true, no doubt, that human thought, driven by the irresistible desire to know itself, has made some headway towards mastering the concept of itself. Philosophy has indeed progressed, and the modern world can proudly point to truths unsuspected by the thinkers of antiquity. But the assiduous and prolonged toil of thought engaged in this task has at all moments disclosed new difficulties; it has ever been busy sketching new concepts which subsequently prove immature and in need of further elaboration, and has been pushing its investigations to such depths as to make it difficult to follow its lead without sometimes going astray, without frequently stopping in utter weariness at the roadside.

Men talk learnedly nowadays of the human spirit, but with a doctrine which is often insufficient or, as we say, not up to date. They have stopped at one of those wayside concepts where thought no doubt passed and temporarily halted, but from which it moved on towards a more distant goal. For while this long history of the endeavours by which man struggles onward towards the understanding of his own nature is the basis on which modern philosophy builds its firm concept of the spirit, yet for those who have not attained the vantage ground of this modern philosophy, this history is unfortunately a very intricate maze; it is the bewildering

"selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte"[1]

from which it is difficult ever to issue. And therefore it is much easier, as Dante once remarked, to teach those who are completely ignorant than those who have a smattering of philosophy. But to-day culture is so intimately connected with philosophical speculation that the greater part of educated men profess this or that system without being aware of it. And when such men do take up the study of philosophy *per se,* they no longer possess the mental ingenuousness, the speculative candour, which would enable them to grasp the obvious, evident, incontrovertible truth of the most profound philosophical proposition.

This inquiry then is difficult. It demands either a long, methodic, laborious study of the history of philosophy conducted with critical vigour, or that unyielding tenacity of the mind which is the surest sign of sound spiritual character; that steadfast firmness by which man, once in possession of a clearly irrefutable, truly fundamental truth, rigorously excludes from his soul all the allurements of prejudice, all convictions formerly entertained, even though extremely plausible, if they contradict his Truth. For he trusts that these perplexities, these difficulties which he is not now in condition to explain, will be removed in virtue of that very thought to which he has confidently committed himself.

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[1] "Forest savage, rough, and stern."—Dante, *Inferno,* i.5.

This unflinching resolve is the courage of the philosopher, who has never feared to brave common sense, and single-handed to marshal against the multitude the array of his seemingly absurd assertions, which however, in the progress of their reciprocal integrations, have subsequently contributed to redeem this very multitude from error,—from that error which is intellectual misery, social wretchedness, economic, political, and moral destitution. Because of this inflexible firmness the philosopher has never dreaded that boundless solitude, that thin atmosphere to which he is uplifted by thought, and where at first he has the sensation of fainting away into the rarefied air.

We must then muster up courage and relinquish all the ideas which we once accepted, even though they still tempt us with superficial glitterings of truth, when once they have proved themselves to be in contradiction with experience. For I too hold experience to be the touchstone of all our thoughts, philosophy not excluded. But I insist that we be careful lest we confound the mockery of the first puppet that dupes our imagination with genuine experience; that in as much as every man speaks of experience in exclusive accordance with whatever concept he has been able to form of it, we too determine beforehand what our conception of it is. Now I say that no concept of experience can be validly entertained which does not take into account that truth which presents itself to us as truly fundamental and therefore to be used as an indispensable basis for all subsequent conceptual constructions.

Such fundamental truth we have previously attained when we established that "We" are not what we seem to be in the dim empirical representation of our personality, a thing among things. Our "Self" is the deeper one by means of which we see all things in whose midst our other self too is discernible. The reality of this, our deeper "self" which cannot be conceived as a thing, without which nothing can be conceived, in the same way that the trunk, the branches, and the boughs are not possible without the root from which the tree issues, is a truth which we may never grasp, but if we do, we shall forever be compelled to see in it the source of all other possible truths, including the concept of experience. For once we have securely mastered it, we will be convinced that it is impossible to conceive whatever is considered and thought of as constituting this world otherwise than as this world which *we* see, which *we* touch, and which, in short, we look upon as the contents of *our* experience: and that it is also impossible to conceive this experience without referring it to *us* who have it not as an object of possession but as an activity which we exercise. So that nothing, absolutely nothing, can be thought when the relationship between things and experience, and again the rapport between experience and ourselves is obtained, without thinking the deep reality of this our "self." We may again close our eyes to this reality or hold it in abeyance, but we can do so only after we have effaced every notion of the two relationships just mentioned, and when we again have immersed ourselves in the mystery of things, in the gloom of their apparent independent existence, of their ever self-defeating multiplicity.

Against this reality of the profound "us" which is the genuine spiritual reality, there are innumerable and awe-inspiring difficulties. They are difficulties that so violently oppress our minds and our hearts as to dismay us, and almost force us to give up this concept of a reality on which all other realities depend, and which cannot but be one alone, and infinite, and really universal.[1] Alone, because in it all opposites must coincide: the good and the evil, what is true and what is false, life and death, peace and war, pleasure and pain, yours and mine,—all things, in short, that we have been obliged to sunder and distinguish in order to take our bearings and meet the exigencies of life. Formidable difficulties indeed! And they are the problems of philosophy. It would be childish and senseless to dispose of them by ignoring that concept from which they derive. It is the philosopher's task, it is the strict duty of human thought to face the problems as they rise out of the positions which it has captured in its onward march. For to yield ground, to turn the back to a truth which has been demonstrated to be indispensable, that is impossible.

Those who wish to orient themselves in the world to-day must, before all, cling to this: that the basis of every thinkable reality is our spiritual reality, one, infinite, universal,—the reality which unites us all in one sole spiritual life; the reality in which teacher and pupils meet when by their reciprocal comprehensions they constitute a real school.

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[1] Many speak of the universal and say that they conceive this universal as concrete and immanent. Few, however, effectively fix their thought on that universality which alone is such, which alone can be such, which has nothing outside of itself, not even the particular, and which is ideal on condition that the idea to which it belongs be reality itself in all its determinateness. And so in speaking of "universal" and of "individual" we must remember that the latter cannot be anything without being the former, since indeed the universal is not a merely abstract idea, but reality, the reality of thought. Therefore I have here used the expression "really universal".—G. G.

What then is this one, infinite, universal reality? Is this question truly unanswerable as it seems to be, as it has often in the past been declared to be? For, it has been argued, in order to give an answer, whether here or elsewhere, we must somehow think the reality to which the answer is referred. We must think it and therefore distinguish it from all the others, and so presuppose it as one existing among many and as forming with them a multiplicity; and this is the very opposite of that reality which we are striving to think. Or, in other words, when we try to say what the subject is, we must, somehow, set it as the object, and thus convert it into what is the opposite of the subject. Or again: the subject cannot think itself, because if it did, it would split into the duality of itself as thinking and itself as thought, and what is thinking is not what is thought. But all these objections together with many others of the same force that are ordinarily raised against radical idealism have but one single defect; which is such, however, as to make it hopeless for the idealist ever to succeed in being understood by those that resort to this kind of argument. These opponents, strangely enough, miss the most elementary meaning of the terms with which they claim to be familiar. They fail to see that when the idealist says "subject," he cannot possibly mean by it one abstract term of the relationship *subject-object,* which, because of this very abstractness, is devoid of all consistency. The *ego* is called "subject," because it contains within itself an object which is not diverse but identical with it. As a pure subject it is already a relationship; it is self-affirmation and therefore affirmation of an object, but of an object, be it remembered, in which the subject is not alienated from itself; by which, rather, it truly returns to itself, embraces itself, and thus originatively realises itself. In order to be *I*, I must know myself, I must set my own self in front of myself. Only thus I am I, a personality, and "subject," the centre of my world or of my thought. For if I should not objectify myself to myself, if in the endeavour to free myself completely from all objectivity, I were to retreat into the first term,—a purely abstract one,—of this relationship by which I posit myself, I should remain on the hither side of this relationship, that is of that very reality in which I am to realise myself. So then by this inner objectification the subject does not at all depart from itself. It rather enters into its own subjectivity, and constitutes it. Surely man may, Narcissus-like, make an idol of his own self: he may worship himself in a fixed semblance already determined and crystallised. But in so doing, he materialises himself, makes his person into a thing, looks away from his true spiritual life, misses self-consciousness, averts his thought from his own intimate being. This self-conversion from person into thing takes place, not when we think of ourselves, but rather when we fail to do so.

Philosophy then, as the thinking of the Spirit in its absolute subjectivity, is the Spirit's own life. For the spirit lives by constituting itself as the ego, and it does this by thinking itself, by acquiring consciousness of itself. And while philosophising then, we cannot but ask what is this one infinite universal reality which is our *Self* and is called the spirit. We cannot dispense with this inquiry into the attributes of the spirit, which is at the same time the inquiry into the attributes of culture.

The examination of the possibility of this investigation has carried us, without our being aware of it, into the very midst of the inquiry itself. For what we considered as an elementary meaning of the word "spirit," the *ego,* which is not something in unrelated immediacy, but which constitutes itself, posits itself, realises itself in that it thinks itself and becomes self-consciousness,—this is also the ultimate characteristic which can be assigned to the spirit, or to man himself, that is, to what in man is essentially human. If we examine all the other differences that have been assigned or could be found by which the spirit is distinguishable from things, we shall find, after due reflection, that they all cease to have a real meaning as soon as we neglect the most profound characteristic of spiritual reality, viz., that this reality is generated by virtue of consciousness. Every form of reality other than spiritual, not only is presented to thought as not conditioned by consciousness, but seems to afford no possibility of being thought (in relation to consciousness) otherwise than as conditioning this very consciousness. And when we say of the spiritual being that it does not know what it is, that it is not acquainted with itself, that it therefore remains concealed from itself, we conceive then its spiritual being in a manner analogous to that by which we conceive material or bodily being,—externally visible, but internally unknown. And we say that the individual fails to grasp his own moral nature, because in fact we make this moral being into something natural, similar to that which is attributed to each one of the things that the spirit sets in opposition to itself.

But the spirit has no nature of its own, no destiny to direct its course, no predetermined inevitable lot. It has no fixed qualities, no set mode of being, such as constitute, from the birth to the death of an individual, the species to which it belongs, to whose law it is compelled by nature to submit, whose tyrannical limits and bounds he can never trespass. The spirit, we have seen, cannot but be conceived as free, and its freedom is this privileged attitude to be what it wants to,—angel or beast, as the ancients said; good or evil, true or false, or, generally speaking, to be or not to be. To be or not to be man,—the spirit, that which he is, and which he would not be if he did not *become*.

Man is not man by virtue of natural laws. He *becomes* man. By man I do not mean an animal among animals, held to no accounting of his deeds, who comes into the world, grows, lives, and dies, unaware. Man from the time he considers himself such, and in so far as he considers himself such, *becomes* through his own efforts. He makes himself what he is the first time he opens his eyes on his inner consciousness and says *"I,"*—the "I" which never would have been uttered, had he not been aroused from the sluggish torpor of natural beings (such as our phantasy represents them) and had not started thinking under his own power and through his own determination.

This freedom which is man's prerogative offers merely an external view, has a very hazy consistency, and appears as something illusory, only because we do not define it exclusively as autonomous becoming or self-making. For in fact "becoming" is ordinarily understood in a way which does not admit of being considered as man's prerogative. Does not every living being *become?* The plant vegetates only because it too has an inborn potency by which it is forced from one stage of development to the next, from which in this process it acquires the mode of being which is peculiarly its own, which it did not have before, which no other being could from the outside have conferred upon it. And yet the plant is not a person but a thing: it is not spirit, but a simple object, and as such it is endowed with a definite nature and moved by a definite law, which is the very antithesis of the freedom which is peculiar to the spirit.

I might without further thought say that this conception of becoming, referred to the plant as a plant, is improper, that in reality the plant does not *become* for the very reason that we deny it its freedom. But I shall begin by stating that the becoming which we attribute to the spiritual reality must be specified and determined with greater accuracy, if we are to consider it as the characteristic of this reality. When so specified and determined, it will be found to coincide with the conception of freedom. Becoming, then, can be taken in two ways, which for brevity's sake we shall call the *autonomous* and the *heteronomous*. That is, the being which becomes may have the law of its becoming either in itself or outside of itself. Becoming covers such cases as, for example, the filling of a vessel into which a liquid is poured. But this becoming takes place in a manner which has its law in the person that fills the vessel; and the filling therefore may be considered not so much a becoming as the effect of a becoming, that is, as the result of that act which is being performed by man. An heteronomous becoming is to be traced back to the becoming of the cause which produces it. The plant vegetates, and its vegetation is a development, a becoming. But could it grow without the rays of the sun, the moisture of the soil? The plant vegetates in consequence of its nature, that nature which in accord with our ordinary way of considering plant life it possessed from the time it was a green blade just sprouting; nay, from the time it was a seed in the ground, or rather when it was as yet in the plant that produced the seed, or better still when it was in its infinitely remote origin. It is evident therefore that we cannot think of the law of becoming as residing, so to speak, within a given plant. Whether we call it nature or name it God, this law transcends the becoming of the plant, its heteronomous becoming as we called it, and is properly the becoming of something else. But the becoming of man is autonomous. If he *becomes* intelligent, that is, if he understands, he does so through a principle which is intrinsically his own; for no man can be made to comprehend what he himself will not grasp. If he becomes good, his perfected will can in no manner whatsoever be considered as determined by an outside cause, without at the same time being thereby deprived of all that is characteristic of goodness.

But in stating that man's becoming is autonomous (or true) we have simply formulated a problem without giving it a solution. What does this autonomous becoming consist in? Simply to notice its existence would never help us to understand it. Every fact is intelligible only as an effect of a cause. And a cause is a cause on condition that it be a thing other than the effect. In order to understand the autonomous becoming or freedom of the spirit, we must not consider it as a fact, that is, as something done. A thing made presupposes the making; and from the deed we must rise to the doing, but to a doing which shall not itself be a thing done, a fact, and similar therefore to the doings which we witness as mere spectators. The doing in which our autonomous becoming is detected is that one of which *We* are not spectators but actors, we the spectators of every other doing, we as the thinking Activity.

This then is the becoming which rigorously may be called autonomous: the one which we know not as spectators but as actors, which comes forth as that reality which is produced by the act of knowing, and therefore is not known because it exists, but exists because it is known,—our existence. It is the existence of us who know, for example, that $a = b$, and who are such only in so far as we know and are conscious of knowing that $a = b$,—of us who suffer or rejoice, and who cannot be in this or that state except by knowing it, so that no cause could reduce us to such a state, unless we were conscious of such a cause and felt its valid application to us,—of us, above all, who are not ourselves unless we apperceive ourselves, by reflecting upon ourselves, and thus acquiring existence as a personality, as human self-consciousness, as thought. Thought in opposition to nature, with which it is constantly contrasted, is nothing but this self-reflection which establishes the personality, and that reality which, absolutely, is not, but becomes. Every reality other than thought *becomes* relatively; and its becoming is intelligible simply as the effect of another becoming. Only thought, only the Spirit, is absolute becoming, and its becoming is its liberty.

But whether it be called "freedom" or "becoming," the important thing is to avoid the mistake, which was general in the past and is still very common to-day, of separating this attribute of the spirit from the spirit itself, thus failing to understand exactly what is properly called the attribute. For example, we say that the triangle is a three-sided plane figure, and we seem to be able to distinguish and therefore to separate logically the idea of *triangle* from the idea of *three-sided plane figure*. But a little reflection will make it evident that in thinking the idea of triangle, we think nothing unless we at least think the plane trilateral figure. So that we do not really have two ideas, which however closely connected may yet be separated to be conjoined again: what we have is one single idea. And such is the agreement of the becoming and of the spirit, and in general of every attribute and of the reality to which it belongs. When we begin inquiring whether the spirit is free or not, we set out on an erroneous track which will take us into a blind alley with no possibility of exit. All the unsurmountable difficulties encountered at all times by the advocates of the doctrine of freedom arise in fact from the error of first thinking the spirit (or whatsoever that reality may be for which freedom is claimed) and of subsequently propounding the question of its properties. For the spirit is *free* in as much as it is nothing else than *freedom;* and the spirit "becomes" in as much as it is nothing else than "becoming," and this becoming cannot therefore be considered as the husk enveloping the kernel—the spirit. There is no kernel to the spirit: it is in no manner comparable to a moving body in which the body itself could be distinguished from motion, and would admit therefore of being thought as in a state of rest even though rest is considered impossible. The spirit, continuing our simile and correcting it, is motion without a mass,—a motion surely that cannot be represented to our imagination, for the very reason that motion is peculiar to the body and does not belong to the spirit; and imagination is the thought of bodies, and not of the thought which thinks the bodies. This idea of motion without a mass, baffling as it is to our imagination, is perhaps the most effective warning that can be given to those who wish to fix in their minds the exact concept of the nature of the spirit. In order to avoid new terminology not sufficiently intelligible and therefore unpractical, we may resort to material expressions, and speak of the nature of the spirit as of a "thing" which becomes, and use such words as "kernel" and "husk." But we must never lose sight of the fact that this manner of speaking, which is appropriate for things, is not suitable for the spirit, and can be resorted to only with the understanding that the spirit is not a thing, and that therefore its whole being consists solely in its becoming.

We are now in a position to understand the meaning of the spirituality of culture, that is, of the reduction of culture to the human personality obtained in the preceding chapter, as well as the pedagogical interest of this reduction. Culture, as the entire content of education, because it must be sought within the personality, and because it resolves itself into the life of the spirit, is not a thing, and does not admit of being conceived statically either in books or in the mind: not before nor after it is apprehended. It does not exist in libraries or in schools, or in us before we go to school, or while we still remain within its walls, or after our nourished minds have taken leave of it. It is in no place, at no time, in no person. Culture *is not*, because if it *were*, it would have to be some "thing," whereas by definition it is the negation of that which is capable of being anything whatever. It is culture in so far as it *becomes*. Culture exists as it develops, and in no other manner. It is always in the course of being formed, it *lives*.

But to understand this *life,* and in order to grasp more firmly this "idea" of culture which is a spiritual banner to rally educators, I must again bring up a certain distinction. Culture, I said, lives (that is, it is culture) when it is endowed with a life that is entirely different from the life which biologically animates all living beings, ourselves included. The difference can be stated as follows: in the case of every other life, we can assert its existence in so far as we have knowledge of it either directly or indirectly. It is always, however, different from us and from our knowing it; so much so that the possibilities of going astray are very great. But for the life of culture, which is the life of our spirit, we have no need of being informed by the experience of others, or even of ourselves. We live it. It is our very thought,—this thought which may indeed err in respect to what is different from itself, as not tallying with it; but which cannot possibly deceive us in regard to itself, since it is unable not to be itself. The life of culture is not a spectacle but an activity. Nor is it activity for some and a spectacle for others. Culture is never a show for any one. No person can ever know for his fellow being. What, for me, Aristotle knows, is what I know of Aristotle.

Culture,—this untiring activity which never for a moment turns into a spectacle for any of us, which ever therefore demands effort and toil,—could not avoid becoming a show and being made up into a "thing," could not escape the danger of dying as culture by degenerating into something anti-spiritual, fruitless, and material, if, while yet being activity, it were not at the same time in some way a spectacle to itself. This point demands careful consideration It is not sufficient to say that culture, that thought is life, and not the thought of life. We will not attain the conception of culture by merely contrasting, as we have done, our life, the life we lead as actors, with the life of others which we behold as spectators, or by opposing the life of ourselves as thinking beings to the life we possess as organic beings, to the life of our senses by which we are on a par with the other animals. The life of thought, in its peculiar inwardness and subjectivity, is still conceived to-day by powerful thinkers, by analogy with life in a biological sense, as irreflective and instinctive, or, as they say, as simple intuition. But thought which though living is irreflective becomes indeed an active performance, a drama without spectators, but it also remains as a drama represented for spectators who are absent, and who should be informed of those things which direct experience had not placed before their eyes. And it is difficult to surmise who would impart to them this information if the house were empty.

In other words, I mean to say that this would-be intuitive life of thought, fading away into the subconscious, melting into the naturality of the unconscious, is, like every form of natural life effectually a stranger to thought (that is *conceived* as a stranger to thought), an object and nothing more than an object of thought, and therefore incapable of ever being a subject, of ever having value as subject, that is, as thought itself. For that reason we can never effectively think it; for never can we truly think any thing which is natural and thought of as natural. Who can say what the life of the plant is? To posit nature by thought is to posit something irreducible to thought and therefore unthinkable. This perhaps would not necessarily be a serious drawback for the life itself of thought if we lived it. For would it not be sufficient to live it? Why insist on *thinking* its life? Why demand a head, so to speak, as a hood for the head? But there is a drawback, and a serious one, as a result of the fact that this life itself of thought does not now, never will in the future, come before us as that irreflective life which it is claimed to be: it comes to us as a philosophy which recommends it and advocates it as the only possible life of thought. In fact, in order to be able to speak of this life, we must first think it. But how could we think it, if the only possible life was that one which we intend to think, and not the one with which we think this irreflective life?

So then, in order that this life of ours (truly, intimately, spiritually ours) may not be confounded with the life of natural things, with that pseudo-life which is only an apparent becoming, an effect of another becoming by which it is transcended, it is not sufficient, as I started out to say, to call it a drama and not a spectacle. As a result of more careful determinations we may now say that it is not another man's spectacle, but our drama which is at the same time our spectacle too. In it the actors play to themselves. It is self-conscious activity. It is activity perpetually watching over itself.

And again: Just as the becoming of the spirit would cease to be that one sole becoming which it actually is, were we to distinguish the spirit from its becoming, so the consciousness of spiritual activity would also become unintelligible if we were to distinguish, as philosophers insistently do, between activity and awareness, between the performance and the show. The distinction here too arises from referring to the spirit, the mode of thinking which is suited for the thinking of things. In the sphere of things, doing is one thing, watching the thing as it is done is another. But to us the spirit's becoming has shown itself to be the very negation of this distinction between actor and spectacle, so that in saying that the actor is his own spectator we cannot introduce, within the unity in which we had taken refuge, the dualism which is excluded from the concept of the spirit. I have spoken of "motion without mass," turning a deaf ear to the claims of our imagination. Now I shall add something that clashes even more violently against the laws which govern our image-making; and I shall do so in order to make it very clear that the spirit does not live in the world of things which is swept over by our imagination. I shall now call the spirit a gazing motion. The spirit's acting—its eternal process, its immanent becoming—is not an escort to thinking, but the very thinking itself, which is neither cause nor effect: neither the antecedent nor the consequent, nor yet the concomitant of the action by which the spirit goes on constantly impersonating itself. *It is this very acting.*

In accordance with the popular point of view which, as I have said, is shared by great philosophers, a distinction is made between the spirit considered as will and the spirit regarded as intellect, or as consciousness, or as thought, or whatever term may be used to indicate the becoming aware of this spiritual activity. But if the spirit in that it wills did not also think, we should be thrust back to the position which we have shown above to be untenable, and be forced to admit that the irreflective life of the spirit cannot be fused with the reflective life, and is therefore unaccountable and unthinkable. The will which *qua* will is not also thought, is in respect to thought which knows it a simple object, a spectacle and not a drama. It is nature and not spirit. And a thought which *qua* thought is not will, is, in respect to the will which integrates it, a spectator without a spectacle. If there is to be a drama, and a drama which is the spirit, it is inevitable that the will be the thought, and that the thought be the will, over and beyond that distinction which serves if anything to characterise the opposition between nature and spirit.

Should we, returning to our comparison, demand of that motion which is spirit a moving mass; should we, grounded on the naïve and primitive conception which identifies knowing with the seeing of external things, demand within the sphere of the spiritual activity itself a doing in which knowing should find its object all ready made, we should continue to wander helplessly in the maze of things, and to grope in the mystery of the multiplicity of things, which are many and yet are not many. We would be turning our eyes away from the lode star which is the supreme concept of the spirit, and thereby show ourselves incapable of rising to that point of view which is the peculiar one of culture.

Culture, as the spirit's life, which is a drama and self-awareness, is not simply effort and uneasy toil, it is not a tormenting restlessness which we may sometimes shake off, from which we would gladly be rescued. Nor is it a feverish excitement that consumes our life-blood and tosses us restlessly on a sick-bed. The spirit's life is not vexation but liberation from care. For the greatest of sorrows, Leopardi tells us, is *ennui*, the inert tedious weariness of those who find nothing to do, and pine away in a wasting repose which is the very antithesis of the life of the spirit. The negation of this life,—the obstacles, the hindrances, the halts it encounters,—that is the source of woe. But life with its energy is joy; it is joy because it is activity, our activity. Another man's activity as the negation of our own is troublesome and exasperating. The music which we enjoy (and we are able to enjoy it by being active) is our enjoyment. But the musical entertainment in which we have no part disturbs us, interferes with our work, irritates us. Our neighbour's joys in which for some reason we are unable to participate awaken envy in us, gall us, bring some manner of displeasure to our hearts.

Culture, then, as life of the spirit, is effort, and work, but never a drudgery. It would be toilsome labour if the spirit had lived its life before we began to work; if this life had blossomed forth, and had realised itself without our efforts. But our effort, our work is this very life of the spirit, its nature, in which culture develops. Work is not a burdensome yoke on our will and on our personality. It is liberation, freedom, the act by which liberty asserts its being. Work may sometimes appear irksome because the freedom of its movement is checked by certain resistances which have to be overcome and removed. But in such cases it is not work which vexes us, but rather its opposite, sloth, against which it must combat. It follows then that the more intensely we occupy ourselves, the less heavily we are burdened by pain. For as our efforts redouble and the resistance is proportionately reduced, the spirit, which perishes in enthralment, is enabled to live a richer life.

Culture then is the extolment of our being, the formation of our spirit, or better, its liberation and its beatification. As the realisation of the spirit's own nature, it is opposed to all suffering and is the source of blissfulness. But it must not be regarded as the fated, inevitable working out of an instinctive principle, or a natural law. The building of a bird's nest, which is the necessary antecedent to generation and reproduction, cannot be looked upon as work; and it is fruitless to try to guess whether this act is a cause of pleasure to the bird or a source of suffering. Instinct leads the individual to self-sacrifice on behalf of the species. But not even this fact, vouched for solely by external inferences, authorises us to conclude that the fulfilment of an instinctive impulse is actually accompanied by pain. So that it seems wiser to keep off this slippery surface of conjecture. It will be sufficient to note here that an action prompted by instinct, conceived as merely instinctive and thoroughly unconscious of the end to which it is subservient, is in no way to be compared with man's work. Human occupation is personality, will, consciousness. The animal does not work. But culture we have said is work. For it is liberty, self-formation, with no existence previous to the process; whereas the laws which govern the development of natural being pre-exist before the development itself. Culture exists only in so far as it is formed, and it is constituted solely by being developed. And what is more, as we shall see in the next chapter, culture does not even count on a pre-existing external matter ready to receive its informing imprint.

To conclude then: culture *is* (in its becoming) only to the extent that the cultivated man feels its worth, desires it, and realises it. It is a value, but not in the sense that man first appreciates it and subsequently looks for it and strives to actualise it. The value which man assigns to culture is that which he gradually goes on ascribing to *his* own culture, and whose development coincides with the development of his own personality. What we ought to want is exactly what we do want; but we want just that which we ought to. The ideal, not the abstract, inadequate, and false one, but the true ideal of our personality, is that one toward whose realisation we are actually working. And the ideal of our culture is that self-same one towards which our busy person remains turned in the actuality of its becoming. But work implies a programme, and spirit means "ideal;" and when we speak of culture we signify thereby the value of culture, of a culture which as yet is not but which must be. Life is the life of the spirit as a duty,—as a life which we live, feeling all along that it is our duty to live it, and that it depends on us whether it exists or not. And culture could not re-enter as it does in the life of the spirit, if it too were not a duty, that is, if it were not this culture to whose development our personality is pledged. So interpreted, culture, far from being a destiny to which we are bound, is the progressive triumph of our very freedom. On these terms only, culture is a growth, and the spirit a becoming.

This attribute, which is an ethical one, is not added to the attribute of Becoming any more than "becoming" was superadded to "freedom." For just as Becoming develops the concept of freedom, so does the ethical develop and accomplish the concept of becoming. Freedom is never true liberty unless it is a process, an absolute Becoming; but Becoming can only be absolute by being moral. And it is therefore impossible to speak of learning which is not ethical.

It has often been repeated for thousands and thousands of years that knowledge is neither good nor bad; that it is either true or false. But is the True a different category from the Good? Are they not rather one sole identical category? Truth could be maintained in a place quite distinct from the grounds of morality, only so long as the world clung to that conception of truth which was the agreement of the subject with an assumed external object. But now by truth we understand the value of thought in which the subject becomes an object to itself and thus realises itself; and in clarifying this new conception of truth, we discover that morality is identical with it. For knowing is acting, but an acting which being untrammelled conforms with an ideal—Duty. And in this manner we explain to ourselves why the mysterious and inspired voice of conscience has at all times admonished man to worship Truth with that same intense earnestness, with those same scruples, with that identical personal energy, which we devote to every phase of our moral mission. The cult of truth is in fact what we otherwise call and understand to be morality, namely, the formation of our personality, which can be ours only by belonging to all men, and which, whether or not ours, is not immediate, not a given personality, but rather one which is intent on self-realisation, on that sacred and eternal task which is the Good.

If we now feel culture to be free, to be a process, and an ethical one at that, we have succeeded in grasping its spirituality, and we are in a position therefore to proceed with security on that way which opens before the educator's eyes, as he intently goes about his work of creation, or, if you so wish to call it, his task as a promoter of culture.

CHAPTER VII

THE BIAS OF REALISM

EDUCATORS of the modern school are bent on transforming its methods and institutions on the basis of the conception set forth in the previous chapters. The subtle discussions required to make this conception clear must have convinced the reader that this work of educational reform could only succeed if preceded by such philosophical doctrines as have recently been evolved in Italy and are now becoming the accepted faith of the newer generation. To this new belief the school must be converted, if it is ever going to conquer that freedom which has been its constant aspiration, and which seems to be an indispensable condition for its further growth.

The faith of the modern man cleaves to a life conceived and directed idealistically. He believes that life—true life—is man's free creation; that in it, therefore, human aims should gain an ever fuller realisation; and that these aims, these ends will not be attained unless thought, which is man's specific force, extends its sway so as to embrace nature, penetrate it, and resolve it into its own substance. He believes that nature, thus turned into an instrument of thought, yields readily to its will, not being *per se* opposed or repugnant to the life and activity of the spirit, but rather homogeneous and identical with it. He believes, moreover, that this sway can only be obtained by amplifying, strengthening, and constantly potentiating our human energy, which means thinking, knowing, self-realising; and that self-realisation is not possible unless it is free, unless it be rescued from the prejudice of dependence upon external principles, and unless it affirms itself as absolute infinite activity. This is the *Kingdom of Man* prophesied at the dawn of modern thought. This is the work which science, art, religion, not less than political revolutions and social reforms, have gradually been accomplishing and perfecting in the last three hundred years. This new spiritual orientation has to a certain extent influenced teaching; and though without a general programme of substantial reforms, the ideal of education has been transformed along idealistic lines. This transformation, strange to say, has been effected in part by means of institutions which have arisen as a result of the recent development of industrial life and of the corresponding complexity in economic and social relations. These schools, because of their names, seem to be quite removed from the idealistic tendencies of modern civilisations. Whether they be called technical, business, or industrial schools, they seem to be and are in fact the result of a realistic conception of life. But such realism, we must remember, is far from being opposed to our idealism, and should not be compared with the realism which we have objected to. We should rather consider it as the most effective demonstration of the idealistic trend of our times. For these institutions are founded on the theory that knowledge increases man's power in the world by enabling him to overcome the obstacles by which nature, if ignored and unknown, would hinder the free development of civilisation in general, and of those individuals in particular in whom and through whom civilisation becomes actual.

Realism, on the other hand, as the opposite of the idealistic conception of life and culture, was shown to be based on a conception of reality which exists totally outside of human thought and of the civilisation which is produced by it,—of a reality existing *per se* in such a way that no end peculiar to man, no free human life, can be conceived which will have the power of bending this reality toward itself, of resolving it within itself. This realistic point of view is not different from the outlook of the primitive man who, awed by the might of nature, kneels submissively before its invisible power, which, he thinks, controls these forces. It is the accepted belief of the naïve and dreamy consciousness of child-like humanity; but it is none the less a conception which is opposed to the course constantly followed by civilisation. Its dangers must be made very clear and its menace removed from the path of its triumphant enemy. To overcome this realistic point of view in the field of education is the duty of teachers, who must be in a position to recognise it, and to track it into whatever hiding places it may lurk. I intend therefore in this chapter to point out some of the most notable realistic prejudices which, though still tolerated by contemporary thought, ought to be definitely stamped out, if we are really convinced of the spiritual character of culture and of its essential attributes.

I shall here bring up again a consideration which I touched upon in the first chapter,—an idea which is the fundamental prejudice of the realistic theory of education in its antagonism to the profound exigencies of the free spiritual life which education should promote. I mean the idea of Science (with a capital S),—that Science which is imagined as towering over and above the men who toil and suffer, think and struggle in quest of its light and of its force; that Science which would be so beautiful, and majestic, and impressive, were it not for the fact that it does not exist. This Science is looked upon as infallible, without crises, without reverses, without vicissitudes of doctrines, without parties, and without nationality,—without history in short; for history is full of these baser occurrences; and men, without a single exception, even the greatest of scientists, even the lofty geniuses that have transformed or systematised knowledge, are all in some measure prone to err. The exceptions which are adduced to contradict this statement are so few, so limited by restrictions and by hair-splitting distinctions, that we can hardly allow them; especially when we consider that even granting the infallible oracular character of some men's utterances, the fact remains that his listeners must undergo the process of understanding him, and in so doing they may go astray. So that from superhuman unfailing verities, we slip back instantly to human fallibility. Infallible Science, then, is not known, cannot be known to mankind; for the simple reason that we who constitute it are subject to error, and being ourselves prone to fail, we expose science to the same danger. If it does exist somewhere it surely is not in this world in which we live, thinking, knowing, and—creating science.

This mythical science, unsullied and incorruptible, segregated from all possible intercourse with thought, ever soaring in the pure air of divine essences, is yet the mother of a numerous offspring, the parent of countless daughters as virginal and as infallible as the mother herself. These are the particular sciences, bearing various names, but all of them equally worthy of the distinction of the capital S in the eyes of their realistic worshippers.

This mythology is taught in the schools which too often are called, and without any figurative meaning, the shrines of learning. Conceived as divinely superlative, as something which, though revealed historically by the successive discoveries of privileged minds, is none the less sharply distinct from the history of humanity, science descends into the school. There it manifests itself as human knowledge, and is communicated to the youthful minds eager to ascend to the heaven of truth. And so the school comes to be looked upon as a kind of temple, as the Church where the inspired Word of the Sacred Books is read and explained by those who have been chosen by the Divinity to act as its interpreters, as preachers of the Faith. With this religious conception of the school we connect the "mission" of the educator, whose task, when not ridiculed and lampooned by the same scoffers who at all times have jeered at the teachers of divinity, has been surrounded by a glamour of religiosity. We see them encircled by that halo of distant respect which we naturally connect with those who, acting as intermediaries between us and the deity, are themselves transfigured and deified.

The school then is looked upon as a temple in which the pupil receives his spiritual bread. But not so the home which the boy must leave, that he may satisfy his mysteriously innate craving for knowledge. Not so the street, where the small boys gather, drawn together by the irresistible need of pastime, by the sweet desire of frolicsome companionship, by the unconscious yearning after spiritual communion with the world which there makes its way into the child's mind far off from the classroom, and lavishes upon it its own light, its portion of thought, its share of new experiences, and the joy of an ever renewed outpouring of sympathetic spirituality.

The custodian of this temple, the schoolmaster, is regarded as a divine, as the minister who imparts the consecrated elements of Science, who leads the pupil to the "panem angelorum," as Dante calls it. But our fathers and mothers are not so regarded,—they who were the first custodians of a greater temple, the world, to whose marvels they gradually initiated our growing minds; they who by the use of speech taught us, without being aware of it, infinitely more than the best of schools will ever be able to teach us in the future; not our elder brothers to whom we always looked up in emulation, and from whom, even more than from our parents, we learned the thoughts and the words suited to our needs; not our grandmother, who long before our eager phantasy might roam through the printed pages, gently led us into Fairyland, and there, in the enchantments of a magic world, disclosed to us that humanity which books and teachers later in life were to re-evoke for us. No! There are no altars to Science except in the Schoolhouse, and none but educators may minister to its cult.

This mythological lore is not merely a harmless form of imagery, against which it might be pedantic to rebel. It is a real superstition, which has its roots deep down in the personality of the educator; it adheres parasitically to culture, climbs over its sturdy trunk, drains its sap, weakens it, deadens it. For when we have stripped this conception of education of its mythological exterior, there yet remains a clearly religious and realistic thought, which is professed with firm adhesion of the mind and complete devotion of the soul, as the inviolable norm of the whole activity which pertains to the object of this norm itself. Let us, for example, consider what is presupposed by the doctrine of methods, the so-called methodology, which is an important part of didactics, and a very considerable section in the whole field of pedagogics. The doctrine of methods comprises a general treatment, which corresponds to what we called the Mother-Science, and a particular treatment for the individual sciences. There is methodology of learning in general, and there are methodics for the several disciplines, or at least for each group of disciplines, into which learning is divided and subdivided in accordance with the logical processes adopted in any particular case, or in accordance with the objects of these disciplines. To each method of knowing, considered in itself, corresponds a teaching method, so that there is one general didactic method, and many special ones by which the general method is to be applied.

But what is the method of a science if not the logical scheme or the form of a certain scientific knowledge?

And, on the other hand, what can be known as to the form of anything, unless we have the thing itself before us in its form and with its contents? In order to define the form of a science, and say, for example, that it is deductive in mathematics and inductive in chemistry, we must first presuppose the existence of these sciences themselves. But in them form is never anything indifferent to content; it is the form of that content. This is made clear if we consider the methodologies which logicians presume to define in the abstract, and with no regard to the determined content of the corresponding sciences. We notice that they are able to present a successful exposition and formulation only by fixing the meaning of each formula by the use of examples, thereby passing from the abstract to the concrete, and showing the method to be within the concrete knowing out of which logic presumes to extract it. In the same way every philosophical system has its method; but whenever criticism has endeavoured to fix abstractly the method of a system, in order then to show how it has been applied in the construction of the system itself, it has been forced in every case to admit that the method already contained the system within itself, that it was the system itself. So that it would have no value whatsoever, it could not even be grasped by thought in its particular determinateness, if it were not presented as the natural form of that precise thought.

No harmful results would follow, if this assumption merely implied the accepting of science and methods as existing by themselves previous to the learning of science by means of its respective method; if it resulted merely in the failure to recognise the impossibility of conceiving science and methods as existing outside of the human mind where they actually do live and exist. If this were all, we should merely take notice of it as a speculative error which affected only the solution of the particular problem in which it appeared. But in the life of thought, where everything is united and connected in an organic system, every point of which is in relation to every other point, there is no error limited to a single problem; its effects are felt in the whole system, and they react on thought as a whole. And since thought is activity itself,—life's drama, as we called it,—every error infects the entire life. Let us then consider the consequences of this realistic conception of methodology.

Science, we are told, in its abstract objectivity is one, immutable, unaltered: it is removed from the danger of error and of human fallibility, and protected from the alternate succession of ignorance and discovery; incapable therefore of progressing and of developing because it was complete from the very beginning, and is eternally perfect. But such a Science is quite different from the one which grows in the life of culture, and is the free formation of the human personality. This one is ever changing, always admitting all possible transformations, different from individual to individual, and different also in the mind of the same person. It lives only on condition that it never fix itself, that it never crystallise, that it place no limits to its development; it continues to be in virtue of its power to grow, to modify itself, to integrate itself and incessantly to develop. Science as culture, as personality, is free, perennially becoming, stirred by ethical impulses, multiple, varied. If we fix the method, it indicates that we are dealing with science realistically considered as pre-existing, and we can therefore have only one sole, definite, immutable method,—one for everybody, and devoid of freedom, not susceptible of development, refractory to all moral evaluation. We should have then a rigid law of the spirit, as compelling as the laws of nature. But by obedience to such a principle, the spirit could not affirm itself: such compliance is surrender and abdication, not the realisation of some good. The most that could be said of it is that perhaps it prevents or annuls an evil which alienates us from a primitive good which is not ours, and not being ours cannot truly be good.

A fixed method forces the spirit into this hopeless dilemma: (1) Either refuse to submit, and thus save life at the cost of all that makes life worth living—*propter vitam vivendi perdere causas* (which evidently would be the case, if we consider that the spirit lives solely on condition that it recognise no pre-established laws, that it be free from the bondage of nature, that it create its own law, its own world, freely; and that, on the other hand, the *cause* of living, what constitutes the worth of life, is that enhancement of the spirit's reality which realises itself in science, and therefore in the method of science).

(2) Or else submit, and kill life in the effort to save its worth—*propter causas vivendi perdere vitam* (which is absurd; for what is the worth of life if there is no life?).

However that may be, the type of education that presupposes a certain ideal of knowledge previously constituted and ready to be imparted by the teacher to the pupil in conformity with some suitable method, must follow a method, a unique one—the method of science, and therefore of the teacher, and therefore also of the pupil, whether the latter is capable of it or not. For it is tacitly assumed that science = method; science = teacher; science = pupil. On the strength of these equations the common term "science" should suffice to identify the first method, which is the one of science in itself, with the last, which is the method of science to be mastered by the pupil. But the above series of equations is false, because, admitting the first, the one namely on the basis of which we are now discussing, neither the second nor the third is possible without passing from realistic to idealistic science,—

two very different things, as I have shown. Even if we leave the teacher out of consideration, we shall have to remember that the pupil learns a science by making it his own,—a fallible science, which he may understand up to a certain point and no further. It will be one of the many sciences which have no one given method, but many of them, and the pupil can only avoid appropriating, individualising, subjectivising science by following that way which is very broad, very easy, and, alas, only too well beaten,—the royal road of non-learning, which is diligently upkept by all the schools which have to teach precise, well-defined science, and have a pre-established method by which to teach it.

But, it might be objected, if science, realistically conceived, is a fictitious entity in no way corresponding to reality, how is it possible to have a method which by its uniqueness and definiteness effectively corresponds to the unalterable unity of this non-existent science? And what teacher would ever arbitrarily impose on his students such an abstract and mechanical method? This is true enough; but man learns to compromise with all deities, Science included. This divinity, in order somehow to exist, must assume a few human traits without however renouncing her divine prerogatives. The fact that Apollo held no communion with the Pythian priestess did not remove the oracular sanctity from the Delphic response. For man knows no deity other than the one which he is capable of conceiving with his soul, just as he knows no other red besides the one which he sees with his own eyes.

Science, which he considers as an object existing in itself, outside of his and other human minds, and therefore endowed with absolute validity in all its branches and in the articulations of these branches, is nothing but the science which *he* knows. And he knows it because he has constructed it in the form in which he knows it: *fingit creditique*. But this absence of consciousness from the constructing, and the consequent faith in the realistic value of science, determine the positions and the doctrines which produce the consequences I have deplored. For he who establishes a school and enacts its regulations takes as a model his own science, without at all being aware that it is only his own. It becomes therefore the content of the institution and determines its method. But a teacher who does not feel inclined to teach that given science and to adopt that special method creates his own ideal, which is but the projection of his personal culture; and unable to account critically for the intrinsic connection existing between his ideal and his personality, he too *fingit creditique*. He believes that the school authority has erred, and that Science, as he understands it, must be kept distinct from the official doctrines. But in his mind his science is not his own. It is, he is confident, that Sovereign Science which by his method and through his cult must enlighten the school over which he rules. And so at the point of arrival where the realistic conception of methods must work, it is found to be effective notwithstanding the rebuffs of reality, and it works. It works and it acts in the only way that it is possible for it to act, namely, by going amiss. It fails and will always continue to fail, not so much because every pupil has his own personality and will have his own particular culture with its corresponding method, but especially because whatever the number of the pupils in a school, the human mind knows of no culture which is not also its own free development, its autonomous ethical becoming. A science, which is supposed to exist before the spirit, becomes a thing, and will never again be able to trace its way back to the spirit. By presupposing science, teachers materialise the culture in whose development education consists; and this materiality of a culture known to teachers renders impossible that other culture which is unknown to teachers, which is going to be not theirs, but the pupils', for whom they work and in whose behalf the school was instituted.

Methods, programmes, and manuals most conspicuously reveal the realistic prejudices of school technique; and against these educators should constantly be on their guard. For these prejudices have, as Vico would put it, an eternal motive, which at times seems to be definitely uprooted and completely done away with, only to reappear, alas! in a different form and with an ever renewed lease of life. The motive is the following: The school is created when people are conscious of a certain amount of knowledge already attained, well defined, and recognised as valuable. Likewise man's value socially is estimated on the work done, and it is on the basis of this finished work that he is credited with the acquisition of a certain personality. This is assuredly no longer a becoming but a being; an existent thing, already realised, which, though a contradiction in terms for those of us who have mastered the concept of the attributes of the spirit, is not thereby condemned as accidental and disposed of once for all. For it is also true that culture, personality, science,—spiritual reality in short,—is a reality, and true it is that when we know it, we know it as already realised. We may indeed have a very keen and lively sentiment of the subjectivity, and inwardness, and newness or originality of our culture, in which, for example, Dante, Dante himself, is *our* Dante, is "We." But yet this "We" looms before us as a truth which transcends our particular "we." It is truth; it is science. And before this divine Truth, before this Science, we too fall on our knees, because it is no longer a mythology, but—our experience, our life.

Thus we think; thus, spiritually, we live. I meditate and inquire into the mystery of the universe unceasingly; but in the background of my inquiry, from time to time a solution appears, a discovery which urges my exploring mind onward. Mystery itself is not mystery unless it be known as such, and then it becomes knowledge. Inquiry is therefore at once a research and a discovery. And this untiring activity, which knows neither sleep nor rest, is mirrored before its own eyes and lives in the fond contemplation of its reflected image, which image in its objectivity appears to it as fixed as it, the activity, is mobile. And no man ever felt so keenly the humility and meanness of his powers, no one ever presumed so little of himself, that he could not yet be drawn by his own nature to idolise himself, to see himself before himself, exactly as he is, as what he cannot but be. And on the other hand we cannot but affirm our immortal faith in the absolute truth of the ideals which impose upon us sentiments of humility.

The error which we must victoriously contend against is not this ingenuous and unconquered faith in the objectivity of thought (which is also the objectivity of all things). What we must fight against is mental torpor and the sloth of the heart, which induce us to stop in front of the object as soon as we get it. A deplorable failing indeed, since the object is lost in the very act by which we grasp it, and we must again resume our work and toil some more in order to attain it again. For the object, in short, does exist, but in the subject; and in order to be a living and real object it must live on the life itself of the subject.

A textbook is a textbook: when it was written, and if its author was capable of thinking and of living in his thought, it too was a living thing; and a living thing, that is, *spirit,* it will continue to be for the instructor who does not through indolence allow himself to believe that all the thinking demanded by the subject was done once for all by the author of the manual. For the manual, as a book intended for the teacher, meant to be constantly awakened by teachers to an ever quickened life, the life of the spirit, can only be what the instructor makes it. He, therefore, must have culture enough to read it as *his* book; he must be able to restore it to life, to re-create it by the living process of his personal thought. This done, he will have done but one-half of the work needed to transform himself from a reader into a teacher. For his reading must lead up to the reading of the pupils; and they ought not to be confronted with the finished product of a culture turned out, all ready-made by the mechanism of the handbook. So that we should now complete our previous statement, and say that the teacher re-creates the book when he revives it in the mind of the one for whom the book was written; when author, teacher, and pupil constitute but one single spirit, whose life animates and inwardly vivifies the manual, which therefore ought not to be called, as it is, a *hand*-book, but a spiritual guide for the *mind*. Unfortunately the oft-deplored indolence which freezes and stiffens spiritual life fastens the books to the hands of the teacher first, and then to those of the pupils.

Teachers should carefully watch themselves. If the book begins to feel heavy in their hands, it is a sign that it is becoming a burden on the pupils' minds. It will end by stifling their mental life, unless its oppressive dulness is dispelled by the reawakened consciousness of the instructor. Teachers should never for an instant become remiss in their loving solicitude for their school. When their book, the book they selected for their pupils, as the means of imparting the culture for which the school stands, ceases to be the pupils' book, cherished by them as a thing of their own, intimately bound up with their persons, then it is high time to throw it away. For the moment a book loses its power to attract it instantly begins to repel. It then becomes an instrument of torture and a menace for the life of the youthful minds entrusted to the teachers' care.

Dictionaries and grammars go side by side with handbooks,—instruments of culture that are only too often converted into engines of torture. The abuse of these books, especially noticeable in the secondary schools, is not limited to them, but is infecting primary instruction too, and teachers should know what such books are, and be enlightened as to their limitations.

Otherwise the dictionary becomes the cemetery of speech, and grammar the annexed dissecting room. A lexicon is a burial ground for the mortal remains of those living beings which we call human words, each one of which always lives in a context, not because it is there in bodily company, in the society of other words, but because in every context it has a special signification, being the form of a precise thought or state of mind, as we may wish to call it. A word need not be joined to other words to form that complex which grammarians call a sentence. It may stand alone, all by itself, and constitute a discourse, and express a thought, even a very great thought. The "*fiat*" of the book of Genesis is an example. What is requisite is that the word, whether by itself or with others, should adhere to the personality, to the spiritual situation, and be the actual expression of a soul. When joined to the soul a word, which materially is identical with countless other words uttered by other souls, and with the peculiar accents of the respective personalities, reveals its particular expression, is a particular word not to be ever compared with any of those countless ones materially identical with it. The biblical "*fiat,*" repeated by men who feel within them the almighty Word of the Creator, is constantly taking on new shades of meaning, is always reinforced by richer tones, and will always continue to do so, as a result of the numerous ways that men have of picturing to themselves the deity, and in accordance with the variety of doctrines, phantasies, and sentiments, or whatever other forms of activity may converge into the expression of a person's spiritual life. So that if, abstractly considered, it is the word that we read, always the same, in the sublime passage of Genesis, in reality it lives in an infinite number of forms, as though an infinite number of words.

But in dictionaries, words are sundered from the minds, detached from the context, soulless and dead. A good lexicon—and those that are put in the hands of pupils are seldom satisfactory—should always in some way restore the word to the natural context, enchase it, so to speak, in the jewel from which it was torn. It should never presume to give meanings of abstracted words, but ought to point them out as they exist historically in the authors who are deemed worthy representatives of the language or of the literature. Dictionaries so compiled do away partly with the objectionable abstractness, but are yet unable to conjure the dead from their tombs. Their weakness and insufficiency lie first of all in the fact that the true context of a word, in which it lives concretely, and from which therefore it draws its meaning, is in reality not the brief phrase, which is all that historical dictionaries can quote, but rather the entire work of the author from which the quoted phrase derives whatever colours it may possess and its own peculiar shade. And the whole work in turn can be understood only in connection with the boundless historical environments out of which it emerges, in which it lives, and where its thoughts receive their peculiar colouring and their special significance. The insufficiency of the dictionary comes out even more clearly from another and more important consideration. An historical dictionary of the Italian language will, for example, tell us how Machiavelli used the word "virtue" (*virtù*), and by the examples adduced we should see or perhaps surmise the meaning of that word, the knowledge of which is not just mere erudition, in as much as in the mind of the cultured reader the thought of Machiavelli is restored to life, and with it the concept which he was wont to express by the term "virtue." But idealistically speaking, is this word Machiavelli's or is it ours,—a word belonging to us who are inquiring into his thoughts? It is ours, by all means, and for the reason that it belongs to *our* Machiavelli. Unless we have then within us this our Machiavelli, it is useless for us to search for the meaning of the word in the dictionary. In it surely we may find it, but as a dead body to be resurrected only by remembering that its life is not in the printed page but in *us*, and only in us. In our life everything will have to be resuscitated that is to become part of our culture.

And the same applies to grammars. As people conceive them and use them, what are they if not a schematic arrangement of the forms by which words are joined so as to constitute speech? And how can we cut the discourse to the quick and extract these schemes, without at the same time destroying its life? The scheme is a "part of speech," and it is a rule. Grammar is a series of rules regarding the parts of speech, considered singly and collectively. But the grammatical scheme—part of speech or rule—abstracts a generic form from the particular expression in such a way that the paradigm of a conjugation, for example, shall be the conjugation of many verbs but not of any determined one. The rule governing the use of the conditional is in the same way referred to every verb which expresses a conditional act or occurrence, but to no one verb in a peculiar manner. But since no speech contains a verb which might present to us a verbal form which is not also the form of a determined verb, nor a conditional which does not point with precision to the action or occurrence subordinated to a condition, it is evident that the scheme places before us, not the living and concrete body of the speech, but a dissected and dead part of this body.

I shall not here recall the controversies occasioned by the difficulties inherent in the normative character ordinarily attributed to grammatical schemes. I shall simply note that a scheme becomes intelligible only if the example accompanies it; and the example always turns out to be a living discourse, within which therefore we meet again the scheme, but liberated from the presumed abstractness to which it had been confined by the grammarian. And I shall merely add that the grammatical norm, which in the realistic conception of grammar is presented as a rule, anteceding actual speech both in time and ideally, has in reality no validity whatsoever excepting as a law internal to the speaking itself, which brings out its normative force only in the act itself of speaking. In spite of this, however, the majority of people consider grammar as an antecedent to speech and to thought, and therefore to the life of the spirit. It appears to them as a reef on which the freedom of the personality must be driven in the course of its becoming, bearing down as it does on a past which is believed to exist beneath the horizon of actuality and beyond the present life of the spirit. To them grammar is legislation passed by former writers and speakers, prescribing norms for those who intend to use the same language in the future. Against this myth, and the consequent idol of grammar worshipped as a thing which has not only the right, but the means also, of controlling and oppressing the creative spontaneity of speech, teachers should be constantly on their guard, if they feel bound to respect and protect the spirituality of culture.

Neither grammar then, nor rhetoric, nor any kind of misguided preceptive teaching should be allowed to introduce into the school the menace of realism which lurks naturally in the shadow of all prescriptive systems. A precept is a mere historical indication, a sign which points to something that was done as to something that had to be done then and is to be done now. It was done and it was thought that it had to be done. But what was done cannot be done over again, and what was thought cannot again be thought. Life knows no past other than the one which it contains within its living present. The precept has no value excepting as that precept which we in every single instance intuit, and which we must intuit, being spiritually alive and free, as the peculiar form of *our* thought, of our speaking, of our doing, of our being, in short, which is our becoming. If we look upon a precept as transcending this becoming, and as an antecedent to it, we misapprehend and therefore imperil our indwelling freedom, which for us now ought to mean not simply the failure to foster the growth of the spirit, but a deliberate attempt to hinder and thwart its development and to blight the function of culture.

One more prejudice of those imputed to realistic instruction must still be pointed out, and it will be the last. It is one of those time-worn devices whose history, extending over a thousand years, reflects the entire life of the school—the composition. Teachers expect and demand that a predetermined and definite theme, as a nucleus of a thought organism, as *leitmotif*, so to speak, of a work of art, as a ruling principle for moral or speculative reflections, be developed by pupils who may yet have never given the topic a single thought, who may possibly be not at all attuned to that definite spiritual vibration, who may in short be quite removed from the line along which the theme should be developed. In the lower grades the line itself is marked, the entire contour is given, and the pupil's mind is arbitrarily encompassed within this fixed outline. These methods are now fortunately applied with diminished rigour and less crudely than before. But the fact remains that in all classes the teacher either assigns a theme at random, picking a topic from a casual reading or from among the whims of his rambling fancy, or else he conscientiously and carefully studies the possibilities of a subject, and develops it to a certain extent before he assigns it; so that he naturally expects the pupil's treatment to conform to his own delineation; and he values the composition in proportion as it approaches the rough draft which he had previously sketched in his mind.

Here too, as elsewhere, we encounter the difficulty of a thought which is presupposed to thinking, which therefore binds it, strains it and racks it out of its healthy and fruitful growth; for thought cannot live without freedom. The dangers are many that beset us in the practice of theme-composition, and not all of them of a merely intellectual character. There is no intellectual deficiency which is not also at the same time a moral blemish; and a course of exercises, such as we have considered, not only jeopardises the formation of the intelligence by urging it along a line of false and empty artificiality to the postiche and the appliqué, but it also, and far more seriously, threatens the moral character of the pupils in that it beguiles them into a sinful familiarity with insincerity, which might perhaps become downright cheating.

Composition however in itself is not taboo for the idealist. Like grammar and every other instrument of the teaching profession it must be converted from the abstract to the concrete. We should never demand of the pupil an inventiveness beyond his powers, never unfairly expect of his mind what it cannot yet give. The boy must not be given a subject drawn from a world with which he is unfamiliar. But when the subject springs naturally from the pupil's own soul, in the atmosphere of the school, and as a part of the spiritual life which unites him to his teacher and to his classmates, then composition, like every other element of a freely developing culture, is a creation and an unfailing progress. For whatever has been frozen by the chill of realism, and has been consequently made unfit for the life of the spirit, may again be revived in the warmth of the living intelligence of the concrete, and be thence idealistically fused with the spontaneous and vigorous current of spiritual reality.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNITY OF EDUCATION

HAVING exemplified the prejudices of realism in the phases that are most harmful to education, I shall now proceed to discuss the fundamental corollary of the idealistic thesis as an effective remedy against the ravages of realism. For, as I have already shown, the realistic conception of life and culture is by no means a minor error which could be corrected as soon as discovered. Originating in a primitive tendency which impels the human spirit on through a realistic phase before it can freely emerge into the loftier consciousness of self and power (which is the conquest of idealism), this error again and again crops out of even the most convinced anti-realistic consciousness. So that if at any moment our higher reflection slackens its vigilance, the error creeps back into the midst of our ideas, gains control of our intelligence, and resumes its former sway over thought. It is not sufficient then to become aware of the faults of realism and of the prejudices in which it is mirrored; we must, in addition to all this, strengthen in our minds the intuition of the spirituality of culture, render it more subtle, more accurate, more certain, and bring to it the energy of a faith which, after taking possession of our souls, shall become our life's character.

We must therefore look intently at the significance of that principle which identifies culture with man's personality, notice its most important consequences, and set these up as the laws of education, since by education we mean the creation of a living culture which shall be the life of the human mind. The first and foremost of these consequences, the direct corollary of our proposition, is the concept of the *Unity of Education*. Though often referred to, it has not yet been attained by pedagogical doctrines, nor has it been the aim of the work of teachers. Neither theory nor practice—more intimately connected than is ordinarily supposed—shows as yet that this concept is understood and adequately appreciated. It is opposed with full force by the realistic conception which, keeping man distinct from his culture, and materialising this culture, naturally attributes to it, and to education in which it is reflected, that multiplicity and fragmentariness which is the characteristic of things material.

This scrappiness of culture and of education is the error on which all the prejudices of realistic pedagogy are grounded. It is the enemy that must be vanquished in the course of the crusade that has been preached by idealism in its endeavour to liberate instruction from the deadly oppression of mechanism.

But in order to combat this foe we must first know it: and we must gain a clear understanding of that unity of education which it antagonises with uncompromising opposition.

If we open a treatise on pedagogy or examine a schedule of courses, if we look through a programme or stop to consider our every-day technical terminology, we cannot help noticing that education is broken up by divisions and subdivisions *ad infinitum,* exactly as though it were a material object, which because material possesses infinite divisibility. Textbooks tell us that education is (1) physical, (2) intellectual, (3) moral. Then narrowing the subject down to one section, the intellectual, which for good reasons has been treated more carefully and sympathetically by traditional pedagogy, we find some such subdivisions: artistic, scientific, literary, philosophical, religious, etc. Again, artistic education will be split up into as many sections as there are arts, and scientific instruction in the same way; for pedagogy assigns to each branch of the classification its corresponding method of teaching. It goes without saying that the sciences of any given branch are different among themselves, and the study of botany, for example, is not the study of zoology. And there are as many forms of culture to be promoted by education as there are sciences; which is clearly shown by school announcements assigning to certain years, and for definite days and hours, the several courses of the curriculum, that is, the several educations.

It is taken for granted that Education, properly so called, will result from the ensemble of these particular educations—physical, intellectual, moral, etc.,—each one of which contributes its share to the final result, and is therefore a part of the entire education. And each field produces certain peculiar results which it would be idle to demand of another section, just as we never expect an olive grove to yield a crop of peaches. Every part, self-contained and quite distinct from the rest, absolutely excludes all other parts from itself. Therefore the subjects taught in a school are numerous, and there must accordingly be specialised teachers. And again each instructor must be careful not to mix up the several parts which compose his subject. The teacher of history, for example, when he takes up the French Revolution, must forget the unification of Italy, and treat each event in order and in turn; and the instructor of Italian will take up the history of literature on a certain day of the week, and devote some other hour to the study of the individual works themselves.

So also we never fail to distinguish and carefully separate the two parts of the teacher's work, his ability as a disciplinarian and his skill in imparting information, for it is an accepted commonplace of school technique that ability to teach is one thing, and the power to maintain discipline is another. It is one thing to be able to keep the class attentive to the discussion of a given subject, and quite another to treat this subject suitably for the needs and attainments of the pupils. Discipline is considered thus as a mere threshold; the real teaching comes after. For, it is argued, discipline has no cultural content; it is nothing more than the spiritual disposition and adaptation which should precede the acquisition, or if we so wish to call it, the development of real culture,—a disposition which is obtained when respect for the authority of the teacher is ensured.

The recognition of that authority simply means the establishment of a necessary condition; as for the real work of education, that is yet to come. And if we should stop at what we have called the threshold, we should have no school at all. There are teachers, in fact, who keep good discipline, but who are yet unable to teach, either through lack of culture or because they are deficient in methods.

All these are commonplaces to which we often resort without stopping to consider their validity. And, in truth, it is because of this lack of consideration that we are able to use them without noticing their absurdities and without therefore feeling the necessity of emending our ways. This lack of reflection resolves itself into a lack of precision in the handling of these concepts. They are formulated without much rigour with a great deal of elasticity, and in the spirit of compromising with that truth against which they would otherwise too jarringly clash.

First of all, no one has ever conceived the possibility of separating discipline from education. What is often done is to distinguish discipline from that part of education which is called instruction, and to consider the two as integrating the total concept of education. Mention is often made of the educational value of discipline. But this kind of co-ordination of the two forms of education—discipline and instruction—and their subordination to the generic concept of education are more easily formulated than comprehended. For if we should distinguish them simply on the grounds that one is the necessary antecedent of the other, we should have a relationship similar to that which connects any part of instruction with the part which must be presupposed before it as an antecedent moment in the same process of development. But the relationship which exists between any two parts of instruction cannot serve to distinguish from instruction a thing which is different from it.

We might wish, perhaps, to consider as characteristic of this absolute antecedence the establishment of the authority without which teaching, properly so called, cannot begin. But the objection to this would be that every moment of the teaching process presupposes a new authority, which can never be considered as definitely acquired, which is constantly being imposed anew, and which must proceed at every given instance from the effective spiritual action exercised by the teacher upon the pupil. In other words, I mean to say that no teacher is able independently of the merits of his teaching to maintain discipline simply and solely on the strength of his personal prestige, of his force of character, or any other suitable qualification. For whoever he may be, and whatever the power by which at the start he is able to attract the attention of his pupils and to keep it riveted on his words, the teacher as he begins to impart information ceases to be what he was immediately before, and becomes to the eyes of his pupils an ever changing individual,—bigger or smaller, stronger or weaker, and therefore more or less worthy of that attention and that respect of which boys are capable in their expectance of spiritual light and joy. The initial presentation is nothing more than a promise and an anticipation. In the course of teaching this anticipation must not be disappointed, this promise must be constantly fulfilled and more than fulfilled by the subsequent developments. The teacher's personality as revealed at the beginning must be borne out by all that he does in the course of the lesson. Experience confirms this view, and the reason of it is to be found in the doctrine now familiar to us of the spirit that never *is* definitely, but is always constituting itself, always *becoming*. And every man is esteemed and appreciated on the strength of what he shows himself to be at any given moment, and in virtue of the experience which we continue to have of his being,—a being which is the development in which he realises himself.

So, then, discipline is never enforced definitely and in such a way that the teacher may proceed to build on it as on a firm basis without any further concern. And it is therefore difficult to see how we could possibly sever with a clean cut the task of keeping discipline from the duty of imparting instruction.

Nor is it any more plausible to maintain that discipline, though it may not chronologically precede instruction, is its logical antecedent, in the sense that there are at every instant of the life of the school both discipline and instruction, the former as a condition of the latter. The difficulty here is that if we assumed this, we ought to be able to indicate the difference between the condition and the conditioned; which difference, unless we rest content with vague words, is not forthcoming, and cannot be found. I maintain that were it possible for the teacher definitely to enthrone, so to speak, discipline in his school, all his work were done. He would have fulfilled his entire duty, acquitted his obligation, and achieved the results of his mission, whether we look upon this mission in the complex of its development, or whether we consider it ideally in the instant of its determined act, which is yet a process and therefore a development. For what, in fact, is discipline? Is it established authority? But this authority is the whole of education. For authority cannot be, as I have explained before, a mere claim: it must become actual in the effective action performed by the educating personality, and this action *is* education. And when this education consists, for example, in the imparting of a rule of syntax, education becomes actual when the pupil really apprehends that rule from his instructor exactly as it is taught to him, and thus appropriates the teacher's manner of thinking and his intellectual behaviour on that special subject, and acts and does as the teacher wants him to. And from the point of view of discipline, this is all we want at that moment.

If in the course of education, considered as a whole or at any particular moment of it, we should separate discipline from instruction, now turning our attention to the one and now to the other, we know from experience that we should never get anywhere. As a matter of fact, the distinction thrusts itself to the fore only when the problem of discipline is erroneously formulated by treating it abstractly. For who is it that worries over discipline as such, and as though it were a thing different from teaching? Who is it that looks upon this problem as an insoluble one? Only the teacher who, unable to maintain discipline, frets over it and failing to discover it where it is naturally to be found, desperately looks for it where it is not, where it could not possibly be. And so he is helplessly perturbed, like the man who, feeling upon himself the concentrated gaze of all the guests seated in a parlour, is no longer able to walk across the floor; it is the same difficulty and impediment we encounter every time we try to watch and study our movements. In the same way the spontaneous outburst of eloquent sentiments that flow from the fulness of our hearts is checked by the endeavour to analyse them, to study the words—to substitute art for nature.

The real teacher, the naturally gifted teacher, never bothers about these puzzling questions of pedagogical discipline. He teaches with such devotion; he is so close spiritually to his pupils, so sympathetic with their views; his work is so serious, so sincere, so eager, so full of life, that he is never compelled to face a recalcitrant, rebellious personality that could only be reduced by resorting to the peculiar means of discipline. The docility of the pupils in the eyes of the able teacher is neither an antecedent nor a consequent of his teachings; it is an aspect of it. It originates with the very act by which he begins to teach, and ceases with the end of his teaching. Concretely, the discipline which good teachers enforce in the classroom is the natural behaviour of the spirit which adheres to itself in the seriousness and inwardness of its own work. Discipline, authority, and respect for authority are absent whenever it is impossible to establish that unique superior personality, in which the spiritual life of the pupils and of the teachers are together fused and united. Whenever the students fail to find their ideal in the teacher; when they are disappointed by his aspect, his gaze, his words, in the complex concreteness of his spiritual personality, which does not rise to the ideal which at every moment is present in their expectations, then the order of discipline is lacking. But when this actual unity obtains—this unity which is the task of the teacher, and the aim of all education—then discipline, authority, and respect are present as never failing elements.

This pedagogical problem of discipline would never have arisen if immature reflection had not distinguished two empirically different aspects of human personality, the practical and the theoretical, whereby it would appear that man, when he does things, should not be considered in the same light as when he thinks and understands, knows and learns. From this point of view, discipline of deportment is to be referred to the pupil as practical spiritual activity, while teaching aims at his theoretic activity. The former should guide the pupil, regulate his conduct as a member of that special community which we call the school, and facilitate the fulfilment of the obligations which he has toward the institution, toward his fellow-pupils, and toward himself. The latter, on the other hand, assuming the completion of this practical edification, proceeds to the mental formation of the personality, considered as progressive acquirement of culture. Discipline in this system appears to be the morals of the school. I use the word morals in a very broad sense—just as morality might be considered as the discipline of society and of life in general. For everybody, it is argued, distinguishes between the character of man and his intelligence, between his conduct and his knowledge. The two terms may indeed be drawn together, but they also exist quite apart. So that a man devoid of character, or possessed with an indomitable will for evil, may nevertheless be extremely learned and shrewd, or as subtle as the serpent; whereas a moral man, through lack of understanding, may become the sport of rogues, and remain illiterate, devoid of all, even of the slightest accomplishments. For will is one thing, they say, and the intellect is another.

The question of the abstractness of discipline impels us now to examine the legitimacy of this broader distinction, which does not simply concern the problems of the school, but extends to the fundamental principles of the philosophy of the spirit. Under its influence, contemporary thought attacks all the surviving forms of this ancient distinction between will and intellect, which rested on a frankly realistic intuition of the world. The philosopher who crystallised this distinction, and fastened it so hard that it could not be broken up completely in the course of all subsequent speculation, was Aristotle. A thoroughgoing realist, like all Greek philosophers, he conceived reality as something external and antecedent to the mind which thinks it and strives to know it. When thought, whose function is the knowing of reality, is thus placed outside of this reality, it is evident that the knowledge to which it aspired never could have been an activity which produces reality. It was accordingly maintained that knowledge could not be more than a mere survey, a view of reality (intuition, theory), almost like a reflected image, totally extrinsic to the essence of the real. But since it was evident that man as spiritual activity does produce a world of his own, for which he is praised if it is deemed good, but blamed if it is judged bad, it had to follow that there were two distinct aspects in human life: one by which man contemplates reality, the other by which he creates his own world,—a world, however, which is but a transformation of the true and original reality. These two aspects are the will and the intellect.

It should not now be necessary to criticise this concept of a reality assumed to exist, in antecedence to the activity of the spirit, and which is the sole support of this distinction between will and intellect. We might say perhaps that though everything does indeed depend from the spirit, and though all is spirit, yet this completely spiritual reality is on one hand what is produced, the realisation of new realities (will), but on the other hand it is but the knowledge of its own reality, and by this knowledge gives no increment to its being. However, if we adopted this view, we would slip back to the position we abandoned as untenable, since a thought which propounds the problem of its essence and of the essence of the reality which it cognises can be but mere knowing. For it is again faced by a reality—even though it has in this case been arbitrarily presumed identical with it—a reality which is as an antecedent to it, and leaves to it only the task of looking on. So we must conclude that the life of the spirit is never mere contemplation. What seems to be contemplation—that consciousness which the spirit acquires of itself, and, acquiring which, realises itself—is a creation: a creation not of things but of its own self. For what are things but the spirit as it is looked at abstractly in the multiplicity of its manifestations?

We shall more easily understand that our knowing and our doing are indiscernible, if we recall that our doing is not what is also perceived externally, a motion in space caused by us. This external manifestation is quite subordinate and adventitious. The essential character of our doing is the internal will, which does not, properly speaking, modify things, but does modify us, by bringing out in us a personality which otherwise would not have been. This is the substance of the will, which we cannot deny to thought, if thought is, as I have shown, development, and therefore continuous self-creation of the personality.

If intellect then and will are one and the same thing, to such an extent that there is no intellect which in its development is not development of personality, formation of character, realisation of a spiritual reality, we shall be able to understand that the ideas of two distinct spiritual activities, as the basis of the ordinary distinction between moral and intellectual training, are mere abstractions that tend to lead us away from the comprehension of the living reality of the spirit. This distinction appears to me exceedingly harmful, nothing being more deplorable, from the moral point of view, than to consider any part of the life we have to live as morally indifferent; and nothing being more harmful to the school than the conviction that the moral formation of man is not the entire purpose of education, but only a part of its content. It is indispensable, I maintain, that the educator have the reverent consciousness of the extremely delicate moral value of every single word which he addresses to his pupils and of the profoundly ethical essence of the instruction which he imparts to them. For the school which gives instruction with no moral training in reality gives no instruction at all. All the objections voiced on this score against education, which we try to meet by adding on to instruction all that ought to integrate the truly educational function, are the result of this abstract way of looking upon instruction solely as the culture of an intellect which in some way differs from the will, from character, and from moral personality.

I wish here to call attention to one of the most controverted questions connected with popular education, because it brings out very clearly the impossibility of keeping moral education distinct from intellectual instruction. It is constantly asserted that the instruction of the common people, that real education which is the main purpose of the modern state, is not a question of mere reading and spelling; that these do not constitute culture, but are as means to an end, and ought never to be allowed to take the place of the end to which they are subservient. The school therefore, if it cannot shape men, should at least rough-hew them and give them a conscience, whereas now, it teaches but often does not educate: it gives to the learner the means of culture, and then abandons him to his own resources. The optimism of educators in the eighteenth century, their promise that marvels would come out of elementary instruction propagated and spread by popular schools devised for this purpose, was constantly met in the course of the last century by an ever-growing mistrust of instruction generally restricted to the notion of mere instrumentality. For in addition to other shortcomings it was felt that this instrument might be put to a very bad use; that elementary learning might be a dangerous thing if it were not accompanied by something that instruction pure and simple cannot give, namely, soundness of heart, strength of mind, and conscience strong enough to uphold intelligence by the vigorous and uncompromising principles of moral rectitude. The hopefulness of that past optimism is fast yielding ground to the pessimistic denunciation of the insufficiency of mere instruction for the moral ends of life.

There is a serious error in this frequent indictment brought against mere instruction as a means of attaining what is called culture. It proceeds from the attempt to separate something that was not meant to be separated. "What God hath united together, man shall not put asunder." And, in any event, a separation as illegitimate as this is not possible. Superficially we may distinguish and apparently sunder instruction from moral training, cut off the means from the end, and separate the ability to read and write from what we are thereby enabled to read and write. In fact the letters of the alphabet are taught without teaching the syllables which they compose, and without the words that are made up of these syllables, and the thoughts that are expressed by these words, and man's life which becomes manifest and real in these thoughts. The elementary school is in fact, as it is in name, the teaching of the elements. Reading, writing, arithmetic, all subjects called for by the school programme are taken up as mere elements with which the pupil is expected, later on, to compose his Book of Life, complete in all its sections. But in the meantime it is thought unwise to burden his youthful mind with the weighty and complicated problems that can be solved only by the experience of a more mature life. Of course after he has gone forth from the school into the outer world the young man will look upon this elementary knowledge as the raw material of his future mentality. As he carves out his path to this or that goal, in accordance with his spiritual interests and in compliance with the contingencies of life, he will avail himself of this initial instruction, use it to further his progress towards this or that end, good or evil as the case may be. For intellectual instruction, it is argued, can be made subservient either to noble impulses or to base motives.

Careful consideration, however, will show that the responsibility of a school for what is called moral insufficiency, but is in reality educational defectiveness, cannot be removed by this kind of considerations. The alphabet begins to be such when it ceases to be a series of physical marks corresponding to the sounds into which all the words of a language may be decomposed. The alphabetic symbol is effectively such when it is a sound, and it is sound when it is an image, or rather a concrete form of an internal vibration of the mind. The child begins to see the alphabet when he reads with it. Up to that time he simply draws images or inwardly gazes at the semblance of the picture he intends to draw, but he does not read. As soon as the symbol is read, it becomes a word. That is why every spelling book presents the letters in the syllables and the syllables in the words. In this way they cease to be mere scrawls drawn on the paper, and become thoughts. They may be dim, vague, and mysterious; they may be sharply defined or they may blend and fuse into a suggestive haze; but they are in every given instance thoughts that are being awakened in the mind of the child. These thoughts have in them the power to develop, to organise themselves and become a discourse. From the simple sentences and the nursery rhymes of the primer, they grow into an ever-richer significance. From the sowing to the harvesting, from the green stalk to the sturdy trunk, it is *one* life and one sole process. The mind that will soar over the dizzy heights of thought begins its flight in the humble lowlands. And it first becomes conscious of its power to rise, when the life of thought is awakened by the words of the spelling book.

The moment the child begins reading, he must of necessity read *something*. There is no mere instrument without the material to which it is to be applied. The infant who opens his eyes and strives to look cannot but see something. The "picture," insignificant for the teacher, has its own special colouring for the child's mind. He fixes his gaze on it; he draws it within himself, cherishes it, and fosters it with his fancies. Such is the law of the spirit! It may be violated, but the consequences of transgression are commensurate with the majesty of this law.

Grammars too, like spelling primers and rhetorics and logic and every kind of preceptive teaching, may be assumed as a form separated from its contents, as something empty and abstract. The child is taught for instance that the letter *m* in *mamma* does not belong to that word (we call it a "word," and forget that to him at least it is not a word but his own mother). That letter *m*, we tell him, is found in other words, *mat*, *meat*, etc. We show him that it is in all of them, and yet in none of them. We therefore can and must abstract it from all concrete connections, isolate and fix it as that something which it is in itself —the letter *m*. In the same manner we abstract the rule of grammar from a number of individual examples. We exalt it over them, and give it an existence which is higher, and independent of theirs. And so for rhetoric, and so for logic.

But in this process of progressive abstraction, in this practice of considering the abstract as something substantial, and of reducing the concrete and the particular to the subordinate position of the accessory, life recedes and ebbs away. The differences between this and that word, between two images, two thoughts, two modes of thinking, of expressing, of behaving, at first become slight, then negligible, then quite inexistent, and the soul becomes accustomed to the generic, to the empty, to the indifferent. It knows no longer how to fix the peculiarities of things, how to notice the different traits of men's characters, their interests, their diverse values, until finally it becomes indifferent and sceptical. Words lose their meaning; they no longer smack of what they used to; their value is gone. Things lose their individuality, and men their physiognomies. This scepticism robs man of his own faith, of his character and personality. The fundamental aim of education ceases to exist. Abstract education is no education at all. It is not even instruction. For it does not teach the alphabet as it really exists, as something inseparable from the sound, and from the word, and from the human soul! All it gives is a new materialised and detached abstraction.

The alphabet is real and concrete, not abstract; it is not a means but an end; it is not mere form but also content. It is not a weapon which man may wield indifferently either for good purposes or for evil motives. It is man himself. It is the human soul, which should already flash in the very first word that is spelled, if it is read intelligently. And it ought to be a good word, worthy of the child and of the future man, a word in which the youthful pupil ought already to be able to discover himself,—not himself in general, but that better self which the school gradually and progressively will teach him to find within himself. So considered, the alphabet is a powerful instrument of human formation and of moral shaping. It is education.

For this reason the school must have a library, and should adopt all possible means to encourage the habit and develop the taste of reading, since the word which truly expresses the soul of man is not *that* one word, nor the word of *that* one book. A word or a book will always be a mere fragment of life, and many of them therefore will be needed. Many, very many books, to satisfy the ever-growing needs of the child's mind! Books that will spur his thought constantly towards more distant goals, and his heart and imagination with it. Thus the child grows to be a man.

Instruction then which is not education is not even instruction. It is a denuded abstraction, violently thrust like other abstractions into the life of the spirit where it generates that monstrosity which we have described as material culture, mechanical and devoid of spiritual vitality. That culture, being material, has no unity, is fragmentary, inorganic, capable of growing indefinitely without in any way transforming the recipient mind or becoming assimilated to the process of the personality to which it simply adheres extrinsically. This mechanical teaching is commensurate with things, and grows proportionately with them; but it has no intimate relation with the spirit. He who knows one hundred things has not a greater nor a different intellectual value from him who knows ten, since the hundred and the ten are locked up in both in exactly the same way that two different sums of money are deposited in two different vaults. What merit is there in the safe which contains the greater sum? The merit would belong to the man who had accumulated the greater amount by a greater sum of labour, for it would then be commensurate with work, which is the developing process itself and the life of the human personality to which we must always have recourse when we endeavour to establish values. For as we have seen, nothing is, properly speaking, thinkable except in relation to the human spirit.

Whether one reads a single book or an entire library, the result is the same, if what is read fails to become the life of the reader—his feelings and his thoughts, his passions and his meditation, his experience and the extolment of his personality. The poet Giusti has said: "Writing a book is worse than useless, unless it is going to change people." Reading a book with no effect is infinitely worse. Of course the people that have to be transformed, both for the writer and for the reader (who are not two very different persons after all), are not the others, but first of all the author himself. The mere reading of a page or even a word inwardly reconstitutes us, if it does consist in a new throb of our personality, which continuously renews itself through the incessant vibrations of its becoming. This then is the all-important solution,—that the book or the word of a teacher arouse our souls and set them in motion; that it transform itself into our inner life; that it cease to be a thing, special and determinate, one of the many, and become transfused into our personality. And our personality in its act, in the act, I say, and not in the abstract concept which we may somehow form of it,—is absolute unity: that moving unity to which education can in no wise be referred, unless it is made identical with its movement, and therefore entirely conformant to its unity.

The man whose culture is limited, or, rather, entirely estranged from the understanding of life, is called *homo unius libri*. We might just as well call him *homo omnium librorum*. For he who would read all books need have a leaking brain like the perforated vessel of the daughters of Danaus,—a leak through which all ideas, all joys, all sorrows, and all hopes, everything that man may find in books, would have to flow unceasingly, without leaving any traces of their passage, without ever forming that personality which, having acquired a certain form or physiognomy, reacts and becomes selective, picks what it wants out of the congeries, and chooses, out of all possible experiences, only what it requires for the life that is suited to it. We should never add books upon books *ad infinitum!* It is not a question of quantity. What we need is the ability to discover our world in books,—that sum total of interests which respond to all the vibrations of our spirit, which assuredly, as Herbart claimed, has a multiplicity of interests, but all of them radiating from a vital centre. And everything is in the centre, since everything originates there.

Education which strives to get at the centre of the personality, the sole spot whence it is possible to derive the spiritual value of a living culture, is essentially moral, and may never be hemmed in within the restricted bounds of an abstract intellectual training. There is in truth a kind of instruction which is not education; not because it is in no way educative, but because it gives a bad education and trains for evil. This realistic education, which is substantially materialistic, extinguishes the sentiment of freedom in man, debases his personality, and stifles in him the living consciousness of the spirituality of the world, and consequently of man's responsibility.

The antithesis between instruction and education is the antithesis between realistic and idealistic culture, or again, that existing between a material and a spiritual conception of life. If the school means conquest of freedom, we must learn to loathe the scrappiness of education, the fractioning tendency which presumes to cut off one part from the rest of the body, as if education, that is, personality, could have many parts. We must learn to react against a system of education which, conceiving its rôle to be merely intellectualistic, and such as to make of the human spirit a clear mirror of things, proceeds to an infinite subdivision to match the infinite multiplicity of things. Unity ought to be our constant aim. We should never look away from the living, that is, the person, the pupil into whose soul our loving solicitude should strive to gain access in order to help him create his own world.

CHAPTER IX

CHARACTER AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

THE principle of educational unity which I have briefly tried to illustrate demands a further development in connection with the claims of physical culture. For after we have unified moral and intellectual discipline in the one concrete concept of the education of the spirit, whose activity cannot be cognitive without also being practical, and cannot realise any moral values except through cognition, it might yet seem that a complete and perfect system of education should aim at the physical development as well as at the spiritual. For the pupil is not solely mind. He has a body also; and these two terms, body and spirit, must be conceived in such close connection and in such intimate conjunction that the health of the one be dependent on the soundness of the other.

Before elucidating this argument, we must voice our appreciation of the pedagogical principle by virtue of which the ancient Greeks developed their athletic education, and which since the Renaissance has for a different motive been reintroduced into the theory of physical culture,—a theory which I do not at all oppose, but rather intend to reaffirm on the grounds of educational unity. This pedagogical principle evidently originated in the mode of considering the function of the bodily organism in respect to the human mind, since every time we scrutinise the interest that has always guided men in the field of education, we find that at all times the aim of education has been the development of the mind. Nor could it have been otherwise; for whether or not in possession of a clear understanding of his spiritual essence, man spontaneously presents himself and is valued as a personality, which affirms itself, speaks even though dumb, and says "I." Education begins as a relation between master and slave, between parent and children. The slave and the son are not supported and cared for—educated—as simple brutes, but as beings endowed with the same attributes as the master or the parent, beings who are therefore able to receive orders or instructions and build their will out of these,—the will which those in authority wish to be identical with their own. The superior commands and therefore demands; the inferior obeys by replying, and he replies in so far as he is a spiritual subject; and this reply will become gradually better in proportion as he more fully actualises that spiritual nature which the master wishes to be closely corresponding to his own. Philosophy, as well as naïve and primitive mentality, considers man to be such in so far as he is conscious of what he does, of what he says, of what he thinks; and also in that he is able to present himself to others, because he has first been present to himself.

Man is man in that he is self-consciousness. Even the despicable tyrant who brutally domineers over the wretch who is forced to submit to his overbearing arrogance, even he wants his slave to be intelligent, capable of guessing his thoughts, and refuses to consider him as an unconscious tool of his whims. The mother who tenderly nurses her sick child is indeed anxious for the health of the body over which she worries, and she would like to see it vigorous and strong. But that body is so endeared to her, because by means of it the child is enabled to live happily with her; through it his fond soul can requite maternal love by filial devotion; or in it he may develop a powerful and beautiful personality worthy to be adored as the ideal creature of maternal affection. If in the bloom of physical health he were to reveal himself stupid and insensate, endowed with mere instinctive sensuality and bestial appetites, this son would cease to be the object of his mother's fondness, nay, he would arouse in her a feeling of loathing and revulsion. It is this sense of loathing that we feel towards the brutes, to the extent that we never can be sympathetically drawn to them, and that we also feel for the human corpse from which life has departed; for life is the basis of every psychological relation, and therefore of every possible sympathy.

Education is union, communion, inter-individual unification; and unity is possible only because men spiritually convene. Matter, we have seen, nature, things, the non-spirit is multiplicity. As soon as the multiplicity of natural elements begins to be organised, already in their organism spiritual activity shines forth. In the spirit is the root and possibility of every unification. It is spirit that unites men. Education therefore cannot be a social relationship and a link between men except by being a spiritual tie among human minds. Therefore it is now, and has at all times been, what it naturally ought to be, education of the spirit.

But as we aim at the education of the spirit, we may or we may not take care of the body; or again we may take care of it in this or that way. It all depends on what conception we have of the spirit. The ancients made a great deal of physical culture, and the Greek philosophers of antiquity considered gymnastics to be the essential complement of music, including in music all forms of spiritual cultivation. The ancients never divided the spirit from the physical reality of man: man as a whole (body and psychic activity) was conceived by them as a natural being subject to the mechanism which regulates and controls nature. When Greek psychology fell under the influence of that mystic outlook which is peculiar to religious belief, the soul, which was opposed to the body, and which was looked upon as chained and emprisoned in the body, was sharply distinguished from another soul. That other soul was kept in contact with the materiality of all natural things, and together with them was governed by the law of mechanical becoming, that is, of the transformations caused by motion by which all the parts of matter are bestirred. This natural soul, susceptible of development, and capable of gradually rising to the height of the other, of the pure bodiless mind whose act is the contemplation of truth; this soul imbedded in the body, which does not therefore give to man a supernatural being, but like all things of nature comes into the world, grows and dies, incessantly passing from one mode of being to another, this soul is the one that can and ought to be educated. The soul which results from the organic process of the physical body, and which in its development proceeds side by side with the transformations of the latter, could not be educated except in connection with the development and improvement of the body. Human thought, which then had not yet secured the consciousness of its own irreducible opposition to nature,—the consciousness, in other words, of its own essential freedom,—seeing itself immersed even as spiritual substance in the indistinctness of nature, could not look upon education as upon a problem of freedom which can not admit of nature as limiting spiritual activity. It was accordingly reduced to conceive this activity, displayed in dealing with man, as being on the same plane with the other forms of activity which propose to deal with things of nature. In a pedagogical naturalism of this sort, the mind could not be the mind without also being body, and therefore had to include physical development in its own process.

But with the advent of Christianity the spirit was sharply dissociated from nature. The original dualism of law of the spirit and law of the flesh, of grace and nature, rescued man at the very beginning from the tyranny of merely natural things, and announced a kingdom of the spirit which "is not of this world." And it is not in fact "of this world," if by world we mean what the word ordinarily implies,—the world which confronts us, and which we can point out to ourselves and to others; the world which, being the object of our experience, is the direct antithesis of what we are, subject of experience, free personality, spirit, Christian humanity. Man, in this Christian conception, in this opposition to nature and to the experimental world, overcomes what within his own self still belongs to nature, subdues that part of him which because natural appears as the enemy of freedom and of the finality of the spirit; as the seducer and the source of guilty wiles which clip the wing of man's loftier aspirations and weigh him down into a beast-like subjection to instinct. He therefore tends to underrate physical education, and sacrifices it to the demands of the spirit. He does not completely neglect the question of the behaviour of man towards physical nature; he could not, since his very dualism is possible only on condition that he correlate the two terms of the opposition. But finding that his attempt to attain freedom and realise his spiritual destiny is thwarted by the natural impulses of the senses, in which the life of the body is made manifest, he decides to remove these hindrances and to clear the way which leads to spiritual salvation. He does then take the body into consideration, but simply to check its instincts and control its sensuous appetites. By the discipline of self-mortification, under the guidance of an unbending will, he subdues the flesh, and subjects it to the exigencies of the spirit.

Evidently this subduing discipline is still physical exercise, but in its own way. The haircloth of St. Francis corresponds in fact to the club of Hercules, and serves the same purpose. The monsters which are knocked down by the weapon which Hercules alone could wield torment the saint of Assisi also; only, they are within him. He even tames the wolf, but without club or chains, by the mere exercise of his gentle meekness. These internal monsters are not, properly speaking, in the material body. If they were, the Saint would not need to worry about them any more than about the earth under his feet or the sack on his shoulder. But they are in that body which he feels; they are in that soul which, with the violence of its desires, the din of its harsh and fiercely discordant voices, distracts him from the ideal where his life is. They are in that soul which thrusts so many claims on him, that were he to satisfy them he would have to part company with his Lady Poverty, and become once more the slave of things which are not in his power,—of wealth, which heaps up and blows away; of Fortune, which comes as a friend and departs as an enemy. He would, in other words, return to a materialistic conception of life. His Lernæan hydra is in the depths of his heart, where hundred-headed instinct, with its hundred mouths, tears the roots of his holy and magnanimous will, eager to resemble the Saviour in love and self-sacrifice.

This monster is strangled with the haircloth, when the body is hardened and trained to self-denial, to suffering, to the repression of all animal passions which would keep man away from his goal. This discipline, far from debilitating the body, gives it a new strength, an endurance which enables man to live on a higher plane than he would if he followed natural impulses. For this more difficult manner of living, a robustness and a hardihood are requisite which are beyond the natural means of the body. The system of physical culture which gives this stupendous endurance is called asceticism.

But this system is an abstract one. Man's life is not poverty, since it is work and therefore wealth. And the mind with its freedom cannot be conceived of as antagonistic to nature. For as body and as sense, in so far as we exist and know of our existence, we belong to this nature. Antagonism and duality import the limitation of each of the opposed terms and exclude freedom which is not to be found within fixed limits; for freedom, as we have said, means infinitude.

The spirit is free only if infinite. It cannot have any obstructing barrier in its path. It can be conceived as freedom only after it has overcome dualism, and when in nature itself and in the body we see the effect of the activity of the spirit. It has no need therefore of walls within which it might feel the necessity of cloistering itself in the effort to renounce the outer world. This is not the way to conquer freedom. A liberty won under such conditions would always be insecure, constantly threatened, always beleaguered, and therefore a mere shadow of freedom. The spirit, if it is free, that is, if it is spirit, must be conterminous with thought, it must extend its sway as far as there is any sign of life to the last point where a vestige of being can be revealed to it. Nothing thinkable can be external to it. Whatever presents itself to it, whether in the garb of an enemy or under the cloak of friendship, can only be one of its creatures, which it has placed at its own side, or in front of itself, or against itself.

This new pedagogical and philosophical view, first disclosed to Humanism, then enlightened by the genius of the Italian Renaissance, appears now to us in the full light of modern thought. Superficially it might seem identical with the classical and naturalistic outlook. In reality, however, it has made its way back to it only in order to confirm and integrate the concept of Christian spiritualism and to bring out its truth. Greek athletics is the training of the body as an end in itself: it surely serves the cause of the spirit, but only in so far as the spirit is grafted on the trunk of the physical personality, and to the extent that it is able to absorb all its vital sap, thereby subjecting itself to generation and decay, the common destiny of all natural beings. The physical culture of the ancients is spiritual discipline, only to the extent that for them the mind too is essentially body. Modern physical education, at least from the time of Vittorino da Feltre, is spiritual formation of the body: it is bodily training for the benefit of the spirit, just as the mediæval ascetic would have it; but of a spirit which does not intend to bury itself in abstract self-seclusion away from the existential world, of a spirit which passing beyond the cloister walls soars over the realm of nature, induing it and subduing it instrumentally to its ends and as a mirror of its will. So that for moderns, too, physical culture is spiritual education, but for the reason that to us the body itself is spirit. Our science is not merely a speculation of ultra-mundane truths, but rather a science of man and of man in the Universe, and therefore also of this nature which is dominated and spiritualised by becoming known, in the same way that every book that is read is spiritualised.

This concrete notion of a spirit which excludes nothing from itself gives concreteness to the Christian conception of physical discipline. For it aims to turn the body into an obedient tool of the will, not however of that will which renounces the world, but of that will which turns to the world as to the field where its battles are fought and won; to the world which it transforms by its work, constantly re-creating it, now modifying one part and now another, but always acting on the entire system, and renewing it as a whole in the intimate organic connection and interdependence of these parts; to the world which forever confronts it in a rebellious and challenging attitude, and which it laboriously subdues and turns into a mirror of its own becoming.

Modern idealism and ancient naturalism both emphasise, though for opposite motives, the importance of a positive education in distinction to the negative discipline inculcated by mediæval asceticism. We said that to-day we develop the body because the body is spirit. This proposition runs counter to common sense. But common sense as such cannot be respected by the thinker unless he first transforms its content.

Our body, we must remember, is not one body out of many. If it were actually mixed with and lost in the multitude of material things which surround it, we could no longer speak of any bodies. For all bodies, as psychologists say, are perceived in so far as they modify ours and are somehow related to it. Or to put it in a different and perhaps better way, all other bodies, which we possess as contents of our experience, form a system, a circle, which has its centre; and this centre is our body. These first of all occupy space, but a space which no one of us can think of or intuit otherwise than as a radiating infinity, the centre of which we occupy with our body. So that before we can speak of bodies, we must first cognise our own. It is the foundation and groundwork of all bodies. Justly, therefore, the immanent sense, profound and continuous, which we have of our body, and whose modifications constitute all our particular sensations, was called the *fundamental sentiment* by our Italian philosopher Rosmini. For our body is ours only in so far as we feel it; and we feel it, at first, confusedly or rather indistinctly, without discerning any differentiated part. We feel it as the limit, the other, the opposite, the object of our consciousness, which, were it not conscious of something (of itself as of something), would not be consciousness, would not realise itself. And it realises itself, in the first place, as consciousness of this object which is the body. Accurately, therefore, was the body defined by Spinoza as *objectum mentis,* as object of consciousness. Objectless consciousness is not consciousness; and it is likewise obvious that the object of consciousness cannot be such without consciousness.

The two terms are inseparable, for the reason that they are produced simultaneously by one and the same act, from which they cannot be detached and this act is the free becoming of the spirit.

Our body, this first object of consciousness, as yet indistinct and therefore one and infinite, is not really in space, the realm of the distinct, of the multiple, of the finite. It is within our own consciousness. And it is only by recalling this inwardness that we are able to understand how it happens that we ("We"—spiritual activity) act upon our body, animating it, sustaining it, endowing it with our vigorous and buoyant vitality; constantly transforming it, in very much the same way that we act on what we easily conceive to be our moral personality. As we direct our thoughts, and bringing them out of the dark into the luminous setting of our consciousness, submit them to scrutiny and correction, to elimination and selection; when we stifle or feed the fire of our passions; when we cherish ideals, nourish them with our own life's blood, and sustain them with our unbending resolve; and again when we quench them in the fickleness of our whims, are we not constantly creating and variously reshaping our spiritual life, making it good or bad, that is, eagerly and scrupulously intent on the quest of Truth or slothfully plunged in ignorance and forgetfulness?

But our body, this inseparable companion, which is our own self, is no particular limb, which as such might be removed from us. We remain what we are, even though mutilated. Each part of our organism is ours, in that it is fused in the sole and indistinguishable totality of our living being,—our heart and our brain, as well as the phalanx of a finger, if perchance we should be unable to live without it, and it therefore effectively constituted our being. The distinction between organs that are vital and organs that are not is an empirical one, and relative to an observation which is true within the limits of ordinary occurrence.

If our body is the body which we perceive as ours, it is this one or that one in accordance with our perception; and this perception certainly is not arbitrary, but our own, subjective, to the point that, in an abnormal way, one may cease to be in possession of his body and thus to be no longer able to live in consequence of the loss of a finger, or even of a hair. This hair then is a vital part, not because it is a hair, but because it has been, insanely if you will, assumed and absorbed in the distinct unity of our body.

I shall try to make my thought clearer by the use of an example. The organ of organs, as a great writer once said, is the hand, and we can look at it from two quite distinct points of view. We may place our hand on a table by the side of other hands, the hands of persons sitting around us. We see its shape, its colour, its size, etc.; we compare it with the others, and we almost forget it is ours, because then we do not, in act, distinguish it from the remaining ones. In these circumstances, it is evident that our hand is in our consciousness as a material object, separated from every essential relationship with us—with us as we are in the act of looking and comparing. This is the external point from which we may view our hand. But there is another one: the hand that picks up the pen as we are about to write is truly our hand, the instrument of which we avail ourselves in order to ply another tool which is needed for our work. In these circumstances our right hand, instead of being for us one in the midst of many, as it was in the case previously considered, is ours, the only one which we can possibly use, as we endeavour to carry out our intention of writing, which intention is our will to realise our personality in that determined way, since doing a thing always means realising that personality of ours which does that thing. Our hand in this case coalesces so completely with our being that without it—the hand already trained to write—we could not be ourselves. Abstractly, to be sure, we should be ourselves. But it is the same story over again. What exists is not the abstract but the concrete. And in the concrete, we, who are about to write, are this determined personality, in which our will flows into the hand; and just as we could not in truth distinguish our Self from our will (we being nothing more and nothing less than this will of ours), in the same way it would be impossible to distinguish between "us" and our hand, between our will and our hand. Since the hand now wields the pen, having perfected its instrumentality by means of this latter, our will no longer leans upon and terminates in the hand, but it flows on and presses into the point of the pen itself, through which, if neither ink nor paper offers resistance, it empties into the stream of writing. This writing which is read is Thought, whereby the writer finds himself at the end in front of his own thinking, that is, in front of himself; that self, which, considering the act materially, he seemed to be leaving further and further behind, whereas in reality he was penetrating into it more and more deeply. But in such a case and by the act itself, can we effectively distinguish between thought, arm, hand, writing material, the written page, that same page when read, and the new thought? It is a circle made up of contiguous points, without gaps or interruptions. It is one sole process, wherein in consequence of a particular organisation of our personality, we place ourselves in front of ourselves, and thus realise ourselves. The hand is ours because it is not distinguished from us, nor, consequently, from the remaining limbs of our body nor from its material surroundings.

This, our hand, knows how to write because we have learned how to write: in exactly the same way that our heart knows how to love, to dare and renounce, by striving earnestly to see ourselves in others, to repress the instinctive timidity of excessive prudence, and to break the force of desire prompted by natural egoism. We are then what we want to be; not merely in our passions and ideas, but in our limbs too, to the extent that their being depends from their functions, and their functions can be regulated by hygiene and exercise, which are our action and our will.

There is, of course, a natural datum which we cannot modify, which we have to accept as a basis for further construction. But this limitation, imposed on the truths I mentioned above, must be accepted without in any way renouncing the truth itself, and should be understood by virtue of both its scientific and moral values. This warning is not merely helpful in connection with the question now before us, but will always prove useful on account of its bearing on the many problems which arise from a spiritualistic conception of life and cause shiftless philosophasters to shy and balk. It is true that there is a body which we did not give to ourselves, which therefore is not a product of our spirit, nor part of its life and substance, but only if we think of the body of the individual, empirically considered as such. In this sense I am not self-produced. The son can ascribe to his parents the imperfection that mars his whole existence, whatever kind of life he may decide to lead. The man who was born blind may blame his affliction upon cruel nature. But the child who calls his parents to account, and the man who complains of nature, is man as a particular; he is one of many men, one of the animals, one of the beings, one of the infinite things wielded by *Man* (that man to whom we must always refer, when we wish to recall that even if the world is not all spirit, there is at least a little corner therein set aside for it); he is one of the infinite things which Man gathers and unifies in his own thought because he is thought. The particular man is man as he is being *thought*, who refers us to the *thinking* man as to the true man. This true man is also an individual, not as a part but as the whole, and comprehends all within itself. And in this man, parents and children are the same man. In it men and nature are, likewise, one and the same, man or spirit in its universality. We (each one of us) are one and the other of these men; but we are one of them, the smaller one, only in that we are the other one, the larger one, and we ought not to expect the small to take the place of the large and to act in his stead. All our errors and all our sins are caused by substituting one in place of the other.

And what is more, the large, the all embracing, the infinite, is present in the small with all his infinitude. Personality as such, in its actuality, does not shrink and restrict itself to the singular and particular man. Within those boundaries which are only visible from the outside, it internally expatiates to infinity, absorbing in itself and surmounting all limitations. The man born blind does not know the marvels and the wondrous beauties of nature which gladden the eyes and the soul of the seeing man. But his soul pours out none the less over the infinity of harmonies and of thought. And the blind man who once saw, in the consciousness of his sightlessness, cherishes the boundless image of the world once seen, and magnifies it indefinitely by the aid of the imagination. He even heals the wounds and soothes the pain of blindness by making it objective through reflection; and the personality, at any event, always victoriously breaks out of the narrow cell in which it might seem to be confined. So that in the depths of even the gloomiest dungeon a ray of light always peers through, to lighten and comfort the soul of man in misery, and to restore to him the entire and therefore infinite liberty of creating for himself a world of his own.

We can therefore say that man, he that lives—not the one which is seen from the outside, but the thinking and the willing man, who is a personality in the act—never submits to a nature which is not his own. He shapes his own nature, beginning with his body, and gradually from it magnifying the effect of his power, and crowding the environing space, which is his, with the creatures he gives life to. We must not consider the smaller man whom we see confined to a few square feet and at the mercy of the passing instant. We must intently look upon that other one who has done and still continues to do all the beautiful things on which we thrive, on that one who is humanity, the spirit. We must consider his power, which is thought and work (work, that is, as thought); and ponder over this material world in which we live, all blocked out, as it is, measured, and traversed by forces which we bridle, accumulate and release, at pleasure, —this world which has been altered from its former state, and has been made as we now see it fit for human habitation, which has been joined to us, assimilated to our life, spiritualised. When we have done all this we shall see how impossible it is to disconnect nature from the spirit, and to think the former without the latter. Nature may be dissociated from the natural man, that is, one of its parts may be isolated from the remainder. But such man of nature is not the one who rules over nature: he is not Volta who clutches the electric current and transforms the earth; he is not Michel Angelo who transfigures marble and creates the Moses.

Physical education, then, is not superadded to the education of the spirit, but is itself education of the spirit. It is the fundamental part of this education, in as much as the body is, in the sense we have used the words, the seat of our spiritual personality. Living means constructing one's own body, because living is thinking, and thinking is self-consciousness; but this consciousness is possible only if we make it objective, and the object as such is the body (our body). For as consciousness is, so is the body. There is no thinking which is not also doing. Thinking not only builds up the brain, but the rest of the body besides. We may call it will, but then there is not one single act of thought which is not the mental activity indicated by this word "will." Without will we should have no bodily substance, in as much as the body is always and primarily life, and living is impossible without willing. What are called involuntary movements are not really such; they differ from the so-called voluntary in that they are constant, immanent, so much so that we can after all interrupt them. Without the exercise of our will we could never hold ourselves erect and keep our feet, but would forever be stumbling and falling; unless we willed it, the power which keeps every organ in its place, and maintains all the organs in the circle of life, would be annihilated. Therefore *morale,* as they say, is a very considerable aid in curing the diseases of the body. It is on this account that societies and religious sects have arisen which make of moral faith an instrument of physical well-being. For the same reason, also, it is impossible for the psychiatrists to draw a line separating mental troubles from bodily ailments. The force of the will, the vigour of the personality, the impulse of the spirit in its becoming, this is the wondrous power which galvanises matter and organically quickens it; which sustains life, equips it, and fits it for its march towards ever renewed, ever improved finalities. It is not temperament which is the basis of character, but character which is the basis of temperament. If we reverse this proposition, every moral conception of life becomes absurd, and every spiritual value appears ineffectual. Don Abbondio then ceases to be wrong, and Cardinal Federico Borromeo is no longer right.

Character too is an empirical concept, and like all such concepts, it has a truthfulness which is not clearly discernible, but dimly visible. Character signifies rational personality, using the term rationality to mean, not the movement or the becoming which belongs peculiarly to reason as the form of spiritual activity, but the coherence of the object on which this activity is fixed, which coherence in turn consists in the harmony whereby it is possible to think all the parts of objective thought as forming a single whole, in that there is no conflict or contradiction among them, and in as much as the object remains always the same throughout all these particulars. If in the course of reasoning we introduce conflicting statements which cannot possibly be referred to the same thing, we cannot be said to reason. Rationality is the permanence of the being of which we think: it is firmness of conception, stability of a law which we apply to all particulars that come under its sway. For the object of consciousness is characterised, in respect to the act which constitutes it, by this stability and immutability. What we think is *that* and no other, whereas thought, by which we think it, is a becoming and a continuous change.

But the character of man is in the object, in the contents of his thought, in what he gradually builds himself up to, in the determined personality which he constitutes by thinking, or, in other words, *in his body.* But body, be it remembered, in an idealistic sense, body as a system, forming, with its law and its configuration, the solid basis of every ulterior development. This truth, vaguely accepted by common sense, which looks upon a strong constitution as a preliminary to a sound character, will appear in its full light only after it has been stripped of the fantastic and material attributes which it receives from a realistically vulgar way of conceiving the body materially. For it is evident that a feeble and sickly man may yet have a steel-like character. Farinata, who stands "erect with breast and brow," as though he held Hell in contempt; Giordano Bruno, who amidst the flames that already consume his flesh disdainfully turns his eyes from the symbol of the religion which had thrust him on the stake, are evident examples of a strength of mind with no relation to their physical powers, which were already destroyed or about to be scattered by an irresistible might. Leopardi is right when he scornfully protests that his ill health is not the cause of that sad pessimism which in his mind solemnly challenges "the unseemly hidden Power."

Character is physical robustness to the extent that this latter is spiritual haleness, and in so far as it is compact, firm, steadfast thought. Thought in this respect appears externally as body, not subject to the hostile forces that perpetually beset it from without and from within; and on account of the intrinsic spirituality of its substance, it is a law rather than a fact, and a process or a tendency rather than a fixed and established manner of being. For organic endurance, which is really what we mean by health, does not consist in muscular development or in the bloom of an exuberant constitution, but rather in an indwelling power, in dynamically persistent and tenacious struggle and adaptation, in the capacity of self-preservation, of self-affirmation, which is the specific essence of spiritual being.

This body, in which thought organises and consolidates itself; this body, by means of which thought is enabled to press on its vigorous development, reabsorbing in its actual present the past accomplishment, and to proceed on its ascent, scaling the height step by step, never sliding downward, because every grade it builds remains as a firm support of the next one;—this is man's character, which is not an attribute of the will considered as practical activity in contradistinction to theoretic activity. Character is an attribute of the spirit *qua* spirit, without any adjectives. We may, if we will, distinguish the practical from the theoretical man, the soundness of the will from intellectual originality. But just as it is not possible to conceive of a really fruitful and constructive practical activity without that coherence of design and self-supporting volitional continuity which constitute character, in the same way intelligence and ingenuity will not become manifest without firmness of purpose, without persevering reflection and study of the object, and without stability of this object of intellectual activity, which again constitute character. If character is set as the basis of morality, then every science and every form of culture, even those which aim at evil, considered in themselves, as the life of the intelligence must have a moral value, must be governed by an inviolable law. By spiritual steadfastness, which is the condition of spiritual productivity, man sacrifices himself to an ideal and constitutes his moral personality, whether he die for his country or whether he labour to bring light amid his thoughts. Life in all its phases is the untiring fulfilment of duty.

To conclude then, physical education must be encouraged, but as spiritual training and as formation of character. Gymnastic exercise, therefore, far from being the only way to this end, may even lead in the opposite direction; and it will do so as long as it is considered apart from the remainder of education, with a particular scope of its own, and with heterogeneous contents in respect to spiritual education properly so-called. The teacher of physical education must always bear in mind that he is not dealing with *bodies,* bodies to be moved around, to be lined up, or rushed around a track. He too is training souls, and collaborates with all the other teachers in the moral preparation and advancement of mankind. If, in addition to his special qualifications, he does not possess culture enough to enable him to discern the spirit beyond the body, and to understand therefore the moral value of order, of precision, of gracefulness, of agility, by which man externally realises his personality, he will no doubt fulfil the ordinary demands of physical culture, but he will just as certainly antagonise and disgust those of his pupils who are most highly gifted and otherwise better trained, and he can therefore lay no claim to the title of educator.

Education then is either one or not effective. The assumption that there are many kinds of education leads to very disastrous results. Education is one; and as a whole it appears unchanged in each one of the parts that we ordinarily distinguish in it, according as we approach the human spirit now from one side and now from the other.

CHAPTER X

THE IDEAL OF EDUCATION

ART AND RELIGION

WE have shown in the previous chapters the necessity of rigorously maintaining the unity of education, of resisting every attempt at separation, of opposing all systems which treat the various parts of education as though they could be kept distinct in practice and theory. There still remains a question which naturally arises at this juncture, and which we must try to answer. For true it is, some one might say, that moral and intellectual education are one and the same thing, and true it may be that education of the mind and culture of the body work for the same results; and it may also be admitted that education being formation, or development, that is, the becoming of the spirit, and the spirit consisting in its becoming or rather in becoming pure and simple, it follows that education means spirit and nothing more. But granting all this, was it really worth while? When we have attained this notion of the unity which is always the same, no matter under how many aspects it may present itself, what have we gained? Have we here anything more than a word? One says "spirit," another might say "God," or "nature," or "matter," or some such thing, and there would not be much difference. It might well be that in the course of the inquiry into the attributes of the spirit, a way was found to invest our word with quite a different meaning; but still, after we have defined and distinguished the concept of the spirit from all the others, we have not progressed much. We may have the satisfaction of continuing to see before us this concept, with no possibility of ever ridding ourselves of its presence, but how much will we know of the contents that this spirit is supposed to have? What are the principles that should govern this education, which has been clearly stated to be not a natural fact, but a free action, and therefore a selection enlightened by consciousness, by reflection, and by reason?

This suggested objection is not a purely imaginary one. Very often superficial critics, forgetting that pedagogical problems pertain to philosophy and are therefore problems of the spirit, awkwardly try to solve them by the insufficient light of common sense. In so doing they warn us that in idealistic pedagogics all particular and definite concepts vanish, and what remains is a vague confused indistinctness of no practical utility to the teacher.

And truly, if the only result obtained by idealistic pedagogics were the demonstration that many concepts, ordinarily considered to be substantially different, are in reality identical, we should not hesitate to call such philosophical knowledge useless and ridiculous. But in the first place we must notice that this assumed deficiency charged against us has partially been shown to be non-existent by the exposition of our doctrine, which reduces education to free spiritual becoming, and resolves the apparent multiplicity of educational forms in the immultiplicable unity of this becoming, outside of which nothing is truly conceivable.

For the defect of our system was assumed in connection with an exigency which divides itself into two parts, respectively corresponding to the form and to the matter of education. For many of the pedagogical errors which we have pointed out were seen to be imputable, not to the choice of an unsuitable content of education, but to the criterion adopted in treating this content. I have already spoken of my disinclination to accomplish a mere negative task; and in the last chapter, while denouncing the materialistic conception of physical education, I certainly did not spare the ascetic view which knows of no body other than the one which harasses the spirit and hinders its progress toward the ultimate good; and thereupon I tried to show that physical culture is spiritual education endowed with that self-same nature which belongs to education when considered as formation of the will and of the intellect. But this does not mean that our thesis reduces itself to a mere theoretic transvaluation or to a new abstract interpretation of our present educative system, which however in practice could not be affected by this purely theoretical difference of interpretation. I tried to make it clear that our conception is not devoid of practical import, and that it does lead to a reform in education and to a new orientation of the school. This was especially brought out in connection with physical culture in the preceding chapter, when I insisted on the necessity that physical instructors be trained in such a way that their mental equipment shall not be limited to notions that refer exclusively to the body in its physical limitations: but that in addition to physiology, anatomy, and hygiene, they be made familiar also with those studies and disciplines that are more intimately connected with character, with the soul, and with the mind.

But besides this, our entire investigation dealing with the reasons for an absolutely spiritualistic conception of education should have made it very clear that it is not possible to entertain these new conceptions without introducing in the school a new spirit, which will not yield to the realistic vogue and to the materialistic, pedantic, old-fashioned education,—a spirit which will bring before us a new duty in every instant of our teaching life and in every word we utter, and which will impress us with the necessity of acting differently from what has been taught by the followers of traditional pedagogical routine. Whatever the subject may be, the form of education has to be in accord with something that should by now be the common possession of us all, namely, the consciousness of the intimate spirituality and of the sacred freedom of our work, which operates not in the material schools but within the souls of our pupils. There it gives rise not to incidents that are unessential to that greater world which is the aim of our religiously serious outlook on life, but to a process in which All is involved. The speculative side then of this form of education is not a useless and abstract theory, but a necessary moment of the moral improvement, of the spiritual enhancement, and of the general regeneration of teaching. Indifference to this reform, and the belief that men may continue to educate without bothering with the subtle problems of philosophy, mean a failure to understand the precise nature of education.

But the question of the content of education is a different one. Having identified education with spiritual reality itself, it follows that the two determinations of the content of the latter belong to the content of the former. One of these determinations is historical in character; it advances as the history of the human mind progresses, assuming now this and now that aspect in accordance with the prevailing spiritual interests. We who have censured the conception of pre-established programmes, as being most dangerous prejudices of pedagogical realism, could not very well presume to determine here in the abstract, the content of every possible form of education for all places and all times. The school, like every other form of education, develops; and as it grows, it constantly changes its content, which again is nothing else than the content that the spirit gives to itself at every moment of its concrete development.

It would be just as irrational to expect a school to map out with precision the limits and the scope of a pupil's culture. Of all the culture carved out for him at school, a boy will absorb only that much which is taken up by the autonomous growth of his personality. This will be supplemented and integrated by the culture which he gets outside of the classroom, in all possible walks of life, and will be so personal and of such a character as to admit of no prevision or predetermination even on the part of the learner himself. Away with pre-established programmes then of any description! Spiritual activity works only in the plenitude of freedom. Horace asks: *Currente rota cur urceus exit?* We answer: Whether an *urceus* or not, what always comes from the *rota* is something which cannot be foreseen, for the very simple reason that what is foreseen is not the future but the past, which we (as in the case of experimental sciences) project into the future, whereas the spirit is a creation which occurs not in time but in a never-setting present.

So every abstract discussion of the possible content of education in general, or of any given particular school, must appear crude and absurd, if we recall that education reflects the historical development of the spirit. What we need to do is to wait, observe, and have faith. For God will reveal himself to us; and God is the very Spirit of ours which at every moment prescribes its law to itself and thus determines its own content.

The other of the two determinations mentioned above is the *ideal*, or, as we perhaps might more precisely call it, the *transcendental*. It pertains to that spiritual content which never changes as it passes through the various historical determinations, and which might therefore be styled the "determiner of the intrinsic and absolute essence of the spirit." This content upon careful consideration reveals itself as form, and more precisely as the form of the historically determined content of the spirit; or again as the concreteness of that form which has been attributed to the spirit considered in itself, which is a becoming. But *qua* becoming, and irrespective of all special aspects with which it historically configures itself, the spirit has already a content of its own, which cannot be absent from any of its historical configurations. In them this content will manifest itself over and over again, but constantly modified by the changes that are being historically produced. Under these varying modes and presentations it permanently abides as the indefectible substance of the spirit. This substance, this ideal spirit which becomes actual in history, cannot be ignored by any kind of pedagogics which aspires to a thorough knowledge of the essence of education.

Having thus formulated the problem, and clinging firmly to the principle of educational unity, we may distinguish the forms of education which proceed from the ideal content of the spirit. But we must always keep in mind that, as these forms are only distinguishable ideally, they can in no way be effectively separated, and must be found in every concrete educative act. So that their synthesis and their complete immanence is the concreteness of educational unity in its opposition to what I have called fragmentary education. Our distinction then will turn out to be an exact logical analysis, which analyses only the terms of a synthesis and cannot therefore be dissociated from the synthesis. By analysing and by synthesising, by determining the spiritual unity without disconnecting or in any way dissociating its intrinsic ideal determinations, we strive to represent the ideal of education.

In making a rapid survey of this analysis, I must refer back to what was said of the attributes of the spirit,—that the spirit *is* in that it *becomes,* that it becomes in so far as it acquires self-consciousness, that its being therefore is consciousness in the act of being acquired. This act is surely self-consciousness, and it does mean cognition, but a cognition which differs from all others in that it has for its object that very one who cognises. And this is the meaning of "I," identity of subject and object,—an identity, however, that because of its curious nature needs to be carefully examined. It was shown in a preceding chapter that two things, to be thought as two, must yet be thought as one by virtue of the unique relationship which makes their duality possible. Here we observe the inverse: identity of subject and object means that in addition to the subject there is—nothing; it means therefore unity. And yet this unity would in no manner be intelligible if it were not also a duality, if, in other words, the identity of subject and object were not also the difference between them.

To distinguish A from B, an initial, elementary minimum difference is required. It is the difference, called *otherness*, by which B is other than A. Without this otherness there would not be A and B, but either A alone or B alone. The subject as it knows itself is certainly not another from the subject alone. But if it did not become *other* to itself, if it were not object also, as well as subject, it would never know itself. To be object as well as subject implies the necessity of distinguishing these two terms, and shows that there is otherness between them. If it sounds harsh to speak of something that first is "*one*" and then is "*two*," we might state the situation in a different and perhaps simpler way. We might say that the subject would not know itself, if remaining always that one and selfsame subject, it were not both subject and object to itself.

Consciousness implies this self-alteration of the subject, which by placing itself as an object in front of itself realises itself, it being real only as self-consciousness. This is the import of the identity of the two terms, subject and object; or of the difference intrinsic to the one, which is but another way of stating it. We may insist as much as we want on the identity of the "I," but it will always be true that this "I" is real only in virtue of its intrinsic difference. And conversely we may insist, as it is more often done, on the difference between the subjective moment of the "I," whereby the "I" is set in opposition to all its objects, and the objective moment in which the ego vanishes. But behind the difference, identity is always to be found. Man, the more he thinks, the more he alters himself, the more objective that reality becomes which he realises by self-consciousness, the more fully he sees the variation, the development, the growth, the enhancement of the object—the world he knows.

The spirit's being is its alteration. The more it *is*, —that is, the more it becomes, the more it lives,—the more difficult it is for it to recognise itself in the object. It might therefore be said that he who increases his knowledge also increases his ignorance, if he is unable to trace this knowledge back to its origin, and if the spirit's rally does not induce him to rediscover himself at the bottom of the object, which has been allowed to alter and alienate itself more and more from the secret source of its own becoming. Thus it happens, as was said of old, that "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." All human sorrow proceeds from our incapacity to recognise ourselves in the object, and consequently to feel our own infinite liberty.

Subject then and object, and in their synthesis, in their living unity, the spirit, which therefore is neither a subject standing against an object, nor its opposite. The two terms, each one for itself, isolated, are equivalent. But every time human thought has isolated them, whether striving to conceive itself, its own spiritual substance, objectively (God), or as a simple subject (a particular man), it has ever reached most desperate conclusions, now totally blocking its way to the comprehension and justification of its own subjectivity, and now secluding itself in an abstract subjectivity, removed from *all* which man theoretically and practically needs in order to live. The reality of the spirit is not in the subject as opposed to the object, but in the subject that has in itself the object as its actuality.

It is on account of this inseverable unity, by which the subject presses to itself the object and becomes actual therein, that the progressive alteration of the object is also the progressive alteration of the subject. At every given moment, the subject, altered as it is, made into the "other" or determined, is yet pure subject, and nothing else than the subject which becomes conscious of itself, and therefore actual by determining itself as subject of its object, in such a way that the subject as well as the object is always new and always different. Not because it is now one subject and now another, in which case succession and enumeration would import multiplicity, and would therefore reduce the spirit to a thing; but because it appears and cannot but appear thus, if observed from the point of view which distinguishes one individual from another, and in the same individual one instant from the next, although from a rigorously idealistic point of view the spirit is one, and its determinateness does not detract from its absolute originality.

This dialectic in which the spiritual becoming unfolds itself (subject, object, and unity of subject and object), this self-objectifying or self-estrangement aiming at self-attainment,—this is the eternal life of the spirit, which creates its immortal forms, and determines the ideal contents of culture and education. The spirit's self-realisation is the realisation of the subject, of the object, and of their relationship. If of these three terms (the third being the synthesis of the first and second) any one should fail, the spiritual reality would cease to be.

This threefold realisation admits empirically of a separation that makes it possible to have one without the others. On the strength of this triple division we speak of art, of religion, and of philosophy, as though each one of them could subsist by itself. So that commonly people believe that it is possible to be a poet without in any way burdening one's mind with religion or philosophy,—especially philosophy, which appears to be the bugbear of most poets. In the same way many philosophers, and among them one of the very greatest, held art to be the negation of philosophy, to the point that it should be banished from the kingdom where the latter was expected to reign. And how often has religion taken up arms, now against poetry, and now against speculation! All of these occurrences were possible because the three terms were looked upon as separable, as though they were three material things, each one of which could be what it was only on condition that it excluded the others.

A superficial understanding of the differences intervening between these three terms is the reason why they are often looked upon as separable. But in reality they are so indissolubly conjoined, that separation would destroy their spiritual character, and put in its place mechanism, which is the property of all that is not spirit.

Art is the self-realisation of the spirit as subject.

Man becomes enfolded in his subjectivity, and hears but the voice of love or other inward summons. Living without communication with the world, he refrains from affirming and denying what exists and what does not exist. He simply spreads out over his own abstract interior world, and dreams; and as he dreams, he escapes from the outer bustle into the seclusion of his enchanted realm, which is true in itself until he issues from it and discovers it to be a figment of his phantasy. This man is the artist, who, we might say, neither cognises nor acts, but sings.

His subjectivity appears empirically to us always as a determined subjectivity, the determination of which proceeds from the object in which the spirit, theoretically and practically, has previously objectified itself. But this priority of the act, by which the artist is considered a man of this objective world before he withdraws into his dreams, is a mere empirical appearance. If we relied on it, we could not preserve to the spirit in its artistic life that originality and autonomy, that absolute spontaneity and freedom, which is the essential character or, as we called it, the attribute of spiritual activity. To become objective, the spirit must first be subject; and in front of the object in which it objectifies itself, it again inevitably becomes subject,—an ever determined one indeed, but nothing else than a subject. That is why the contemporary theory of æsthetics holds that form in art absorbs in itself the content, with no residuum. It absorbs it *qua* subjectivity; for whatever the object be which this subjectivity, empirically considered, has enwrapped, it draws it entirely over to itself, reassumes it, and as pure subjectivity it cannot return to its object without passing through the moment of its opposition to the object,—the moment in which the subject is nothing else than subject, and finds in itself infinite gratification. This is the realm of art, a realm from which the spirit, in consequence of the very function of the subject, is compelled to issue; since the subject is subject in that it issues from itself, becomes self-conscious, objectifies itself. So the poet as he dreams breathes life into the personages of his dreams, builds them up, and gives them reality. What is his own abstract subjectivity he chooses as a world in which he himself may live absolutely; and the ideas which mature in that fantastic world of his—which is nothing more, as I have said, than his abstract subjectivity—are affirmed by him without any reserves, and are opposed to the ideas of philosophers and of men who prefer concrete reality to phantasy.

This lyrical bent, peculiar to the artist who enhances himself by exalting his own abstract individuality, is in direct contrast with the tendency of the Saint, who crushes and annihilates this same individuality in the face of his God,—that God who infinitely occupies his consciousness as the "other" in absolute alterity to him, so that the subject is hurled into the object in a total self-abstraction. It sinks in the contemplation of its own self in its objective "otherness," of itself become the other, in which it no longer recognises itself. So he deifies this other self, places it on the altar, and kneels before it. Thus the saint's personality is nullified; or rather, it is actualised and realised in this self-annulment, which is the theoretical and practical characteristic of mysticism and the specific act of religion.

It is not possible to tear art from the spirit's life, in as much as it could not be the synthesis it actually is without being subjectivity. It is equally impossible for the spirit to be completely devoid of religiosity. The mystic flower of faith grows out of the bosom of art,—a faith in an object which draws the soul to itself and conquers it. The life of the spirit is an eternal crossing from art to religion, from the subject to the object. It is impossible for the artist to realise his art in unalloyed purity, since his world, the world he has created for himself, is nevertheless the bigger world, out of which, empirically speaking, he is driven only by the needs of practical life, which awaken him and remind him of the existence of a wider world. In the same way it is impossible to realise a pure religion in which the subject completely and effectually might annihilate itself. For in the measure that faith increases in intensity, and the sentiment of one's own nothingness grows deeper, and the idea that the object is all becomes more obsessing, in that same measure the energy of the spirit increases, of the spirit as the subject that has been powerful enough to create this situation. Altars must be built in order that people may kneel in front of them. The concept of God, it, too, has a history. And from this history no word can be taken away on the assumption that it was immediately *revealed*. For there is no word which pre-exists as such before the act of him who cognises it. And to fix a dogma, that is, to rescue it from the flow of evolution, we should have to withdraw from the course of evolution the men themselves who are to accept it.

Nothing therefore is more impious than the history of religion, in the course of which man, now dragging his God down to the depths of his apparent misery, now lifting him to the heights of his real greatness, progresses from station to station along the unending way of sorrows and joys. The process of mental development shows unwittingly, by the very acts of man's innocent piety, that God is *his* God, that the life of the object is the same as the life of the subject.

The nature then both of art and of religion implies a flagrant contradiction which comes to this,—that the subject to be subject is object, and the object to be object is subject. Hence the torments of the poet and the spasms of the mystic. A perfect art and a perfect religion, that is, art which is not religion, and religion which is not art, are two impossibilities. This does not mean that either art or religion can ever be superseded and left behind as two illusions, ancient and constant, if we will, but none the less devoid of all value. The very contrary of this is true. Just because there is no pure art, religion is eternal; and art is eternal, because religion cannot be attained in its absolute purity.

The concrete spirit is neither subject nor object. It is a self-objectifying subject, and an object which becomes the subject in virtue of the subjectivity that alights on it as it realises it. The spirit is therefore a becoming. It is the synthesis, the unity of these two opposites, ever in conflict and yet always intimately joined. And the spirit, as this unity, is the concreteness both of art (reality of the abstract subject) and of religion (reality of the abstract object). It is philosophy. Many definitions have been given of philosophy, and all of them true, because directly or indirectly they may, on the strength of what is expressed or what is understood, be reduced to the following definition: that philosophy is the spirit. If we say that it is the science of the spirit, we indulge in a useless pleonasm. For science, unless we distinguish in an absolute manner (which is impossible) one grade of determinateness from the other, is the same as consciousness; and spirit is, as we have seen, self-consciousness. If we say that philosophy is the science of reality in its universality, we lose sight of the fact that reality, for those who do not stray off into the maze of abstractness, *is* the spirit. A definition which has never lost its value is that one which makes philosophy consist in the elaboration of concepts, that is, in the unification of all the concepts (those we possess, of course) into a coherent concept. This is an excellent definition, and it warns us that philosophy is not obtained by stopping before abstractions, no matter what these abstractions may be. All particular things are abstractions, each one of which yields a concept, and all of them give a number of concepts, which must be brought together and unified, if we ever intend to think all things that are thought, and thus philosophise. The subject without the object as the artist wants it is an abstraction; and similarly abstract is the object which religion looks up to.

We are accustomed, not without reason, to distinguish the life of the spirit from philosophy. But the reason, instead of destroying, confirms the identity between spirit and philosophy, and for the following cause. The spirit never being what it ought to be, we live acquiring consciousness of ourselves. But when we pause to ask ourselves if we have really obtained this consciousness, and turn to our life as to the subject-matter of this problem, which is the problem of philosophy, we discover that we cannot answer in the affirmative. For answering is spiritual living, a living, therefore, which consists not in having self-consciousness but in acquiring it. So that philosophy does not arise from the need of understanding the life already lived, for the past is the realm of death; but rather from the much keener desire of living, of leading a better life, a true life, and of finally realising this spiritual reality which is our ideal. But when?

Can we believe that there is ever going to be a philosophy which will definitely fulfil the ideal? It is obvious that a pursuit of such philosophy would lead the spirit into a race to death; whereas on the contrary the spirit is life; it is an impulse to ever more intense living.

This philosophy, it is evident, is not the exclusive, esoteric classroom discipline, the professional privilege of a few specialists. It is rather the source from which this professional speculation derives its right to address all men who have an exalted sentiment of their human dignity, who hearken to the deeper utterances of their souls, who are able to see how much of their own self there is in this vast world which is being disclosed to their eyes; who, even though vaguely and timidly, are conscious of the divine power that resides in every human heart; who feel that this human heart, prone though it be to all baseness, is also capable of lifting itself to the most sublime heights, and of enjoying the pure and lofty satisfactions which human phantasy ordinarily relegates to heaven. In the depths of every mind there is a philosophy: the mind itself is untiring speculation, which more or less successfully scales the height, but which is always turned upward to the summit whitened by the rising sun. Life is made human by the rays of this philosophy. Man is really man when he recognises an object which is the world, reality, law, and when he recalls that nothing absolves him from the duty of being in this world; of seriously being in it, which means working and co-operating towards reality by knowing reality and fulfilling the law. For in his freedom and power he can never divest himself of his own responsibility; he must therefore develop his capacity to the utmost value, and to that end work and work, think, and act as the centre of his world. This philosophy does not allow him either to withdraw into the abstract retirement of his egoistic self, or to deny and sacrifice this self to an imaginary reality. This philosophy is never finished, never completed, for it is his own spirit, his very self, which to live must grow, and which must constitute itself as it develops. And therefore this philosophy cannot help being man's ideal, which is always being realised and which is never fulfilled.

So, then, education, which aims at that concrete and truly real unity which is the life of the spirit, must always be moral, always spiritual, always philosophic. An invidious word, perhaps, for those who have had the misfortune to fall into the mean and vulgar habit of grinning and scoffing in retaliation for the unsparing censure inflicted by the ideal on sloth, presumption, and cowardice. We might perhaps replace this word by "integral," excepting that this adjective is generic and therefore inappropriate.

I must add, however, that in speaking of philosophic education, I do not mean any special course in philosophy. Though I believe that special philosophical training has an essential function in the curriculum of secondary schools which aim to prepare and direct towards higher studies a matured mentality, scientifically trained and humanly inspired, I yet hold that this special philosophical training can be effectual only if all education, from its very beginning, wherever that may be, has been philosophic. We must reflect that just as it is impossible for a man to be moral only at certain hours of the day, and in certain particular places, morality being the atmosphere without which the spirit cannot live, so that ethical teaching is distorted and deflected as soon as it is relegated to certain definite books, to be studied in connection with certain definite courses; in the same way this philosophy which is for us the ideal content of education, and therefore its ideal, cannot but be present in every real educative act, cannot help reflecting itself in every throb it gives to the soul of the pupil. This general philosophic education naturally includes art and religion, which cannot be limited subject-matters of special courses of instruction, co-ordinated or subordinated to the other elements of the curriculum.

Only the particular sciences, that is, the sciences properly so called, may be freely moved in a student's schedule; they may be added or taken away, they may be grouped this or that way, and be variously distributed in accordance with the needs of the moment and the particular exigencies of the student or of man in general. For these sciences reflect in themselves the fragmentary multiplicity of things which have been abstractly cut off from the centre of the spirit, to which however they too refer. And because they do refer to it, the teaching of them should be spiritualised, moralised, humanised; it ought to acquire the concreteness of philosophy, and therefore never ignore the exigencies of art and of religion. For otherwise it will be merely material instruction, "informative education," which in reality is no education at all.

During the Revival of Learning education was humanistic. Its ideal was art. The historical life which corresponded to this ideal was the individualism of our Italian Renaissance. After the Counter Reformation, art, which is individuality in abstract subjectivity, was abandoned to itself, and inevitably decayed in the cult of lifeless form; it became barren in the imitations of classical art considered as final perfection, to which the individual might raise himself but beyond which he could not possibly proceed. Art became thus the negation of originality, and of that subjective autonomy of which it naturally should be the most enhancing expression. So that classicism up to the Romantic Revolt remained the cultural form of a society submissive to the principle of authority and religiously oriented. These conditions favoured the study of the science of nature, which to the extent that it is governed by the naturalistic principle is a manifestation of religiosity. The devotee of natural science speaks in fact of his Nature with an agnostic reverence similar to that professed by the saint in the worship of God. Nature, which alone he knows, becomes the object before which the subject, Man, disappears. But as science progresses, the need of shaking the principle of authority makes itself felt; the accepted truths of nature are subjected to criticism; the power of doubting is reintroduced, and the subject again reasserts itself. So the advancement of natural science has gradually turned humanity away from the shrines of naturalistic science. When naturalism opposed the claims of religion, it ceased to be the science of nature, and became philosophy. This influenced the scientific spirit in its clash with religious dogmas, and restored to it the consciousness of the moment of subjectivity which had been forgotten. The ideal of culture, which prevailed in the nineteenth century with the triumph of positivism, was science, naturalism, and therefore religion. It is now high time that the two opposed elements be joined and united, and that the school be neither abstractly humanistic in the pursuit of Art nor abstractly religious and scientific, but that it be made what it is ideally, and what it is also in practice when it efficaciously educates—the philosophic school.

As each one has a different path to follow in this world, each one will accordingly have his own education. But all paths converge to one point, where we all gather to lead in common that universal life which alone makes us men. And as we meet at this centre, we must understand each other, and should be able therefore to speak the same language, the language of the spirit. We are compelled by an irresistible need to live this common life, and together to constitute one sole spirit. But this end we shall never attain if man, who ought to be entire and complete, acts as a mere fragment,—such fragment, for example, as the æsthete, or the superstitious worshipper, or the star gazer, always unaware of the pit under his feet. If we continue in this state, in which one man clings to the superstition of mathematics, another idolises entomology, a third worships physics, and so on indefinitely, if man insists on fencing off his little piece of this "thrashing-floor that makes us cruel," knowing no other man but himself, feeling no needs other than his own, then war will break out. Not a disciplined war, governed by a law, by an idea, by reason, of which it is the life; but a war of every man against his brother,—the anarchistic uprising, the disintegration of the spirit, and the stern suffering which is true misery.

The dislike for the *purus mathematicus*[1] is traditional. But whether he be a mathematician, or a priest, or an economist, or a dentist, or a poet, or a street cleaner, man as a fragment of humanity is a nuisance.

We want mathematics, but we want it *in* the man. And the same for religion, economics, poetry, and all the rest. Otherwise we suffocate, and die stifled. For all these are things, but there is no life; and things oppress us and kill us. Therefore let us spiritualise things by reviving the spirit. Let us release it, that it may freely move in the organic unity of nature. Let us train it so that its strength, agility, balance, and all around development shall be able to control all its dependent functions, which can be successfully carried on only on condition that they agree, and collaborate toward common life. And this is what I call philosophy.

Or we may call it humanity, if the word philosophy suggests strangeness and difficulty of attainment. For our demand for an educational reform, in accordance with our renewed consciousness, is prompted by the old but never ancient desire which put the lantern in the hand of the Greek philosopher. Education is truly human when it has for its contents that ideal which I have briefly touched upon in this chapter, the ideal of the spirit, philosophy.

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[1] Referring to the old phrase, *purus mathematicus, purus asinus.*

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

We may look upon the preceding chapters as a kind of general examination to which we submitted our consciences, by reflecting on the way we have always performed our duty as teachers, by considering our purposes, and by scrutinising the internal logic of our task. And our investigation has been eminently human, since indeed man's essence, we have now come to understand, is to acquire self-consciousness.

The patriotic character of the event which was the immediate cause of this work induced me to show that the common spirit which brought us together was not a mere political sentiment, of which we should rid ourselves in crossing the threshold of the school. For we could not but bring into the classroom our own humanity and our living personality, in which the content of our teaching and of all education must live. This personality, however it may be considered, from whatever point of view it may be regarded, has no particular substance which is not also at the same time universal,—domestic as the case may be, or social, political, or whatever may be the phase in which it is determined in its historical development. And since, in this historical development of our universal personality, there is Italy with her memories perpetuated by our immanent sentiment, by our immanent consciousness and by our immanent will, we could not possibly be ourselves were we not at the same time Italian educators.

And looking attentively at this universal foundation on which our own human value is supported—call it language, logic, law,—we were led to study the relationship existing between individuality, which is the aim of all forms of education, and this universal spirit which here intervenes as it does in every moment of the human life. It intervenes in education, as the science and the conscience and the entire personality of the teacher. This personality seems to be violently imposed upon the pupil in such a way as to check or hinder his spontaneous development; but we saw that the immediate logical opposition between teacher and learner gradually resolves itself into the unity of the spiritual process in which education becomes actual.

Education therefore appeared to us, not as a fact which is empirically observable, and which may be fixed and looked upon as subject to natural laws, but rather as a mystical formation of a super-individual spirituality, which is the only real, concrete personality actualised by the individual. In order to understand it, we had to liberate it from every kind of contact with culture in its materialistic acceptance; and we therefore insisted on the speculative inquiry into what we called the realistic point of view. We endeavoured to explain how and why culture is the very process of education, and the very process of the personality in which education takes place. This conception would have lacked the necessary support, had we not carried our investigation further, and shown that this culture in which the spirit unfolds itself is not the attribute of a mind existing amidst other minds and face to face with surrounding nature, but is instead the most genuine signification of All. For it is the life of the spirit in which everything gathers to find its support and become thinkable. Man, as he is educated, is man rigorously considered as spirit,—spirit which is free, because infinite and truly universal in every one of its moments and attitudes. This the educator must intently consider if he wants to conceive adequately his task and its enormous responsibilities, which become evident when he reflects how in the monad of the individual, in the simple soul of the child entrusted to his creative care, the infinite vibrates, and a life is born at every instant, which thence throbs over the boundless expanse of space, of time, and of all reality.

This adequate conception need not be elaborated into a complete system of philosophy. The educator must sense and grasp this infinite over which every word of his is carried, every glance of his, every gesture. As he enters the classroom, as he approaches the child, to whom not only *magna reverentia* is due, but the very cult which is shown to things divine, he cannot but feel himself exalted; he cannot but be fully conscious of the difficulties of his lofty station, and of the duty of overcoming them. He must therefore dismiss from within himself all that is petty in his particular personality, all his preoccupations and passions, all his commonplace everyday thoughts. He must shake off the depressing burden of the flesh, which pulls him downward; and he will then open his soul to fortifying Faith, to the ruling and inspiring Deity. The man who is not capable of feeling in the School the sanctity of the place and of his work is not fit to be an educator.

The spirituality of education becomes however an empty formula, and a motif for rhetorical variations, if on the one hand we do not possess the concept of the essence or of the attributes of the spirit, and if on the other we do not sharply expose those realistic prejudices of pedagogy which have been maintained in the field of education by the materialistic conception of man and by a tradition which is both unreflecting and alien to all radical criticism. I tried to satisfy both these exigencies rather by arousing the reflection and impelling it on its way than by escorting it on a journey which must be undertaken with due preparation.

And finally, in the effort to provide ourselves with a motto, so to speak, and a rallying banner, I set forth the doctrine of educational unity—of the education which is always at all moments education of the spirit. For even physical culture is conceivable only as formation of the mind, and more properly of character. Education, we saw, may be made actual in a thousand different ways, only always on condition that we observe the law which proceeds from its innermost essence and constitutes its immanent ideal. Every education is good, provided it is education—philosophical, human, mind-stirring education; provided it does not bring atrophy to any necessary function of the spirit, does not crush the spirit under the weight either of things or of the divinity, nor excessively exalt it in the consciousness of its own personal power; provided it neither hurls it into the free abstract world of dreams nor fetters it in the iron chains of an inhuman reality; and provided it does not shatter it and scatter its fragments by the multiple investigations of things innumerable, the knowledge of which can never bring satisfaction. For it is the function of education to enable the centralising unity of the reflective spirit to become articulate and varied through the multiplicity of life and of experience, which is the actuality of the spirit itself. Opposition to all abstractions, in behalf of the concrete spirit and of liberty—that is our educational ideal.